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THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

BY R. THERRY, ESQ.

OF GRAY'S INN, BARRISTER AT LAW.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"He had ambition to prevail in great things. He had, likewise, honour, which hath three things in it: the vantage ground to do good,—the approach to kings and principal persons,—and the raising of a man's own fortune."

BACON.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXVIII.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

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SPEECHES,

&c. &c.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD.

MAY 27, 1802.

In July 1801, *a total Change of Administration took place. The following is a List of the new Administration.*

First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.	Rt. Hon. H. Addington.
Lord Chancellor	Lord Eldon.
Lord Lieut. of Ireland	Earl of Hardwick.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs	Lord Hawkesbury.
Secretary of State for the Home Department	Lord Pelham.
Secretary for the War Department	Lord Hobart.
President of the Council	Duke of Portland.
Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland.
First Lord of the Admiralty .. .	Earl St. Vincent.
Master of the Ordnance.....	Earl of Chatham.
Treasurer of the Navy	Mr. Charles Bragge.

Mr. Canning rose, to bring forward his promised motion respecting the cultivation of the island of Trinidad, and said: —

Mr. Speaker,

Circumstances, with the explanation of which I

do not think it necessary to trouble the House, have prevented me from taking any part in the important discussions which have lately occupied Parliament. But although, by these circumstances, and by the feelings arising out of them, I have found myself precluded from expressing, even by my vote, the opinion which I certainly have formed upon the general subject of the treaty of peace; yet, that treaty being once concluded, and having received the sanction of Parliament, whatever may be my private opinion of it, there is but one duty, for me, in common with every member of this House, and for every good subject of this kingdom, each to endeavour, as far as in him lies, to make the best of the new situation in which the country is placed by it, to turn to the best account the advantages which are left to us; and in that view to push, as far as it is capable of going, the improvement of those valuable acquisitions, which, from among the numerous and brilliant conquests of the war, we have been fortunate enough to be able to retain.

I do assure the House, that it is with this view, and in this spirit, that I have presumed to solicit their attention to one of those two important acquisitions, the island of Trinidad. I will not deny or disguise that my attention was first and most forcibly drawn to this island, by the connection which one possible mode of cultivating and improving it necessarily has with a subject

upon which I have, in common with a large proportion of the community at large, felt very strongly;—I mean the African Slave Trade; the enormous increase of which, if the whole island of Trinidad should be to be brought into cultivation by imported negroes, must be such as to appal any man who looks at it, and such as must shock this House, when it considers its own recorded opinions upon that subject. But though this was the first point of view in which I considered Trinidad, I should do great injustice to the cause which I have undertaken, if I were not to aver, that, in examining into the subject with this view, I have found reason to be convinced full as strongly, that the cultivation of Trinidad, in the manner to which I have referred, is not more directly forbidden by the fear of that danger and that shame which would attend the enormous extension of the Slave Trade, or rather the creation of a new Slave Trade for this express purpose, than it is by every consideration of the security of the colonies, and of the true policy of this country, under the present circumstances of the world.

It will appear from what I have said, that if any gentleman came hither with the expectation of hearing a long discussion on the subject of the Slave Trade considered by itself, he will find himself, perhaps not disagreeably, mistaken. I have

no desire, and it is not at all necessary for my object, to go into any such discussion. All that I wish to prove upon that subject I find already established by much more satisfactory authority than any reasoning of mine could afford—the votes of the House of Commons. I shall assume upon this subject nothing but what the House of Commons has affirmed and recorded. If any gentleman supposed that it was my intention to depreciate the value, or obstruct the improvement of Trinidad, he is equally mistaken: I wish to improve it more effectually, and to greater advantage than can be done by the old system; I wish only to prevent your throwing away the opportunity of an improvement essential not only to the immediate value of this one acquisition, but to the safety of all your old possessions in the same part of the world. Lastly, Sir, if any one could imagine that my object was to create embarrassment to the present administration by the proposition which I am about to submit to you, I know not how I can better refute such an imagination than by declaring, (which I confidently and conscientiously do,) that had the same opportunity,—the same necessity I should rather call it,—for discussing the modes of cultivation applicable to a new island in the West Indies, arisen under another administration, under the administration of those who possessed all my

confidence, and, exclusively, all my attachment; of those who had the glory of acquiring Trinidad, instead of those who have had the prudence to retain it: I should equally have thought it a duty, unless the subject had been previously taken up by the Government, or by abler hands than mine, not to let the first session of parliament, after Trinidad had become the property of the British Crown, pass away, without calling the House to the consideration of some such proposition as I have now the honour to submit to the House. I trust this will be deemed a satisfactory answer upon this point. If not, I have no professions to make, I have nothing more to add, but that I do feel myself to be discharging my duty, and that, for the discharge of a duty, I presume, no apology is required.

I may perhaps hear it alleged, that there is no necessity, or no justification for the interference of the House of Commons in the present stage of this business. As to the necessity of some such measure as that which I have to propose, the best way of proving it, perhaps, will be, to state shortly the course of the events and observations which have induced me to bring this measure forward.

Not long after the signing of the preliminaries of peace, a paper was circulated, not only in the city of London, but throughout the Leeward islands, purporting to be a copy of the plan in

possession of Government, for the allotment and sale of the unclaimed lands in Trinidad, with such a description of the fertility and convenience of the settlement as was calculated to excite the cupidity of monied men, and to lead to the expenditure of a great sum of British capital on the speculation. I do not say that this plan was circulated by Government, or with their knowledge; but from whatever quarter it came, it certainly agreed entirely with the papers which Government have since produced to the House of Commons, or rather these papers are but an imperfect, though, as far as they go, a faithful abstract of the plan so circulated. About the same time, a sort of notice was given in this House by the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of an intention to raise a sum of money (no matter for what purpose—the purpose specified is now otherwise and unobjectionably provided for), by the sale of uncleared lands, the property of the crown in the West Indies. Putting these two circumstances together, I could not but be struck with their coincidence, and I took the earliest opportunity that the meeting of Parliament after the Christmas recess afforded, to ascertain, whether or no there did exist such an intention respecting the island of Trinidad, and whether Parliament was to be apprised of the plan, and to have an opportunity of considering it, before it was carried into execution? I

received no assurance that such an intention did not exist; but I was distinctly told, that if such a plan was in agitation, it would not be thought necessary previously to submit it to Parliament. It seemed to me that there remained but one course to pursue—to call the attention of this House to the subject; which I have accordingly done; and unless the House of Commons means to abandon its own pledges and duties altogether, it will not refuse to entertain the proposition which I have to submit to its consideration.

As to the right of this House to entertain such a proposition, if it shall seem good, that surely is not easy to be disputed. Parliament has been called upon by the Executive Government to consider the whole of the treaty, by which, in compensation for many valuable restitutions, Trinidad is ceded to this country. Parliament has been invited to acknowledge its value, to congratulate upon its acquisition. It appears to follow, by a consequence scarcely necessary to be argued, that Parliament has the right to ascertain the value which it acknowledges, and to deliberate how best to establish and improve the importance of that acquisition upon which it has offered its congratulations to the throne; above all, that it has a right to implore of the throne that this acquisition shall not be employed in a manner directly to contravene and render nugatory resolutions which this House has formerly passed,

and wishes which it has expressed to the throne, and which the throne has graciously received. And if the necessity or the right exist at all, this is the stage of the business in which alone our interference can be effectual. Wait till the sale and allotment of lands in Trinidad is actually made, and the thing is past your power; the mischief is done—and you can only regret, fruitlessly, that you did not interfere sooner.

This brings me to state precisely the object of my present motion. My object is delay only: I wish to prevent the immediate, and, as I contend, the improvident disposal of the lands of Trinidad, in a manner that must completely frustrate the views of the House of Commons, until Parliament shall have had an opportunity of examining and discussing the subject. I wish to keep the subject within the power of Parliament. I do not propose to you to decide any thing now, one way or the other: I only entreat of you not to suffer it to be made impossible for you to come to the decision which may be right hereafter. I do not touch any thing that exists: I have nothing to do with the Slave Trade, as far as it is now carried on for the supply of our already subsisting establishments in the West Indies; I have no thought of invading or endangering the vested interests of the West-India proprietors: just the contrary; I am persuaded I shall show that what I have to propose, is calculated to strengthen and

secure them. I entreat gentlemen, therefore, to put out of their minds the abstract question of the Slave Trade, and all the discussions and feelings which belong to it; I entreat them to consider this question in its true light, as a new question arising out of a new state of things in the colonial world, and as one which it would become us equally to consider, whether the old Slave Trade were to exist or to be abolished, or to be partially restrained. Whatever may be the fate of the existing Slave Trade, the question of creating a new Slave Trade for the cultivation of new land in a new colony, is fit matter for separate discussion; and the question of, whether this be the only, or the best mode of turning the island of Trinidad to good account, is one which it becomes us seriously to investigate, and to investigate now. When grants or sales have taken place, it will be too late. There will then be vested interests to set up, in bar of any decision upon the subject of this new Slave Trade; or those individuals who vest their property in Trinidad, in the hopes of the Slave Trade being confirmed to them, will have to complain that the contract of Government is broken. I wish Government to keep its faith; I wish the House of Commons to preserve its character: and this can be done only by pausing to examine, before Trinidad is hastily put out of our hands.

The object of the motion thus defined, there

are naturally two distinct branches into which the considerations belonging to it divide themselves. First, how far is the House pledged not to adopt any measure that may tend to create a new Slave Trade, and how far is the cultivation of Trinidad, in the manner proposed, likely to interfere with those pledges? Secondly, what is the best account to which Trinidad can be turned, in every view of colonial and national policy?

To prove what are the recorded opinions and pledges of the House, I desire that the resolution of the House of Commons, of the 2d of April 1792, "That the Slave Trade ought to be gradually abolished," shall be read; and also the address of the House, of the 6th of April 1797, praying, "That His Majesty would direct such measures to be taken as should (among other things) gradually diminish the necessity, and ultimately lead to the termination of the Slave Trade;" together with His Majesty's gracious answer to that address, "That he would give directions accordingly."

Before I proceed to comment on votes of the House of Commons, it may perhaps be expedient, as there are many members of the House who may not have assisted at the passing of them, shortly to notice their history.—The first of them, the resolution of 1792, was moved by a right honourable friend of mine (Mr. Dundas), who was certainly never supposed to be

indifferent to the interest of the colonies, or to the utmost practicable extent of colonial cultivation. Yet such was the spirit in which this resolution was conceived, so far was the framer of it from having any view to the laying a new basis for the trade in slaves, by bringing new land into cultivation, that it was expressly stated by him as part of his plan, to appoint a Commission to ascertain the losses which actual West-India proprietors might sustain by being prevented from bringing uncleared land, already their private property, into cultivation; so strictly was it intended to guard against any increase of the Slave Trade by an increase of cultivation. The address of 1797 was as little the fruit of enthusiasm and wild speculation: It was moved by an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Charles Ellis), himself a West-India proprietor, and acting in this instance, as I am sure my honourable friend will readily acknowledge, as the representative and organ of the whole body of West India proprietors in Parliament. The object of this address was, to give to Parliament and the country the assurance that the West Indians themselves laid claim to the continuance of the Slave Trade only till such time as they should be able to continue their cultivation on the then existing scale without it; not to increase the Slave Trade beyond its actual bounds, still less to uphold the principles or defend the justice of it; but, on the contrary,

to give a pledge of their desire gradually to diminish, and ultimately to abolish it, whenever that could be done consistently with those vested interests which they conceived to be guaranteed to them by the faith of Parliament and of the Country. Such was the object of that address; and the benevolence and ingenuousness of the character of him whom they selected to bring it forward, were undoubtedly the best securities that could be offered to the House for the sincerity of those who promoted and those who concurred in it. I appeal, then, to my honourable friend (Mr. C. Ellis), whether or not, on the principle of the address which he then moved, he does not feel himself bound, and not himself only, but all those whose sentiments he spoke, and all those whose concurrence he obtained on that occasion, to vote in support of a measure, the object of which is not only strictly conformable to the spirit, but falls much within the letter of his address; which goes not even to diminish the old Slave Trade, but to prevent a fresh one from being instituted, more enormous in its extent, and more aggravated in its evils? I appeal to those moderate men who supported that address of my honourable friend, and the resolution of 1792, which I before referred to, who hailed that proposition (the resolution of 1792) as the first moderate practical measure which had been brought forward for the sanction of Parliament, as equally remote from enthusiasm

on the one hand, and from a cold-blooded, hard-hearted approbation of a trade, "to the horrors of which," as they emphatically said, "no words could add," on the other hand;—I appeal to them whether they can withhold their assent?—I desire them to tell me on what principle they can withhold it,—from a proposition, which is moderate even in comparison with their moderation; which does not injure a hair of the head of the existing Slave Trade, leaves it to be abolished as gradually as they please, but only prevents a new and rival Slave Trade from arising, to cross and blast their benevolent intentions. I appeal particularly to those among them who, when the period at which the Slave Trade was to be made to cease altogether, was under consideration, voted either for the year 1796, which was carried, or the year 1800, the longest period to which any man then ventured to propose prolonging its existence; and I ask with what face they can stand up and defend a plan for cultivating a new island with new importations? a plan which must make the beginning of the nineteenth century, not the period of the extinction of the Slave Trade, as they fondly voted it, but the era of its revival, of its new birth, the date from which its warmest and most anxious admirers may cease to fear for its mortality or decay.

I have said, that the motion which I have to propose goes on grounds different from any other

that have heretofore been submitted to the deliberation of Parliament. It certainly sets out with great difference of circumstances in this respect—that if there be consistency in man, those persons who have been the most violent opponents of every former measure for the restriction of the Slave Trade, are bound to support this; the moderate men, and the West Indians. To the West Indians, indeed, I have still other arguments to address,—those of their interest, which are manifestly in my favour; but for the present I am contented to appeal to their consistency. There remain, then, but two classes of persons from which I could apprehend any difference of opinion: the first a small, I hope, and select class, those who admire the Slave Trade for itself, who deem of it, as Cicero did of virtue, that it requires only to be looked at to be beloved.—"*Quæ si modò videretur, incredibilem amorem excitaret sui.*" With men holding that opinion I can have no argument. It requires a degree of fellow-feeling to be able even to differ in discussion to any purpose. One must settle at what point the difference begins; but such persons must have their minds altogether so differently constituted, their sentiments, affections, and passions must be so unlike any thing that I can conceive, that I avow my incapacity to understand them, and my despair of making them understand me. To their opposition, therefore, I must make up my mind: but I trust to theirs

only. The other class to which I have alluded is one whose opposition I should be concerned to have to encounter; that of those with whom from the beginning I have cordially agreed in opinion respecting the necessity of abolishing the Slave Trade. I trust it will not be felt by such persons, that the proposition which I offer, because a modified is an unsatisfactory one. I know that in minds of a sanguine cast such a feeling is sometimes apt to prevail; that partially to redress a grievance is often erroneously conceived and represented as giving sanction and establishment to all that part which you leave as you found it; and that this feeling is sometimes even carried so far as to rejoice in any increase of the grievance, from the notion that it must ensure and accelerate the total remedy. But this doctrine is surely to be received with some qualification. First, indeed, it may possibly be true, where those who are to bear the ill, and those who are to administer the remedy, are the same persons. Then I can understand an enthusiastic observer saying of those who are labouring under oppression, from which they might free themselves, but will not, "I am glad that they are made to feel still more; grind them harder still, and let us see if they will at length be roused to resistance." But is this the sort of case which we are now to consider? Is this the road by which alone we look to arrive at a remedy? God forbid! There is

yet another consideration; that of degree. If the augmentation of evil would accelerate the remedy in such a degree, as that the proportion of evil incurred in the whole would be less than if you had acquiesced in partial redress, at the risk of leaving what was unredressed to last the longer, there might be some ground for rejecting partial measures; but is not this at best a hazardous experiment?—and may not the augmentation of the evil be so great, in the first instance, as that no man would be justified in consenting to it on so precarious a hope of ultimately hastening the remedy? Let us see then what is the degree of increase to the Slave Trade which will be occasioned by bringing Trinidad into cultivation, according to the plan in the papers on your table.

I will next refer to the papers before the House, which contain a statement of the quantity of land remaining to be granted in Trinidad, in order to form some estimate of the number of negroes that would be required to bring it into cultivation.

"From these papers it appears that there remain to be granted 2,720 allotments of land, of 320 acres each, amounting in all to 876,400 acres; of which near one half, or 420,000 acres, is stated to be fit for the cultivation of sugar. It is requisite to particularize this, because the sugar cultivation is that which requires so much the greatest proportion of negro labour, that it in fact may be taken as regulating the importation. From

the same authority, that of the papers on the table it appears, that the estates already granted (by the Spanish government, for no grant has been made since the island came into the possession of the crown of Great Britain) were in number 400. The quantity of each estate is not specified in the papers on the table, but from an authority on which I rely the more, as I have found it correct in every particular where those papers afford the means of comparison, I am enabled to state that the whole amount of the land in cultivation is somewhere about 34,000 acres, or not quite one twenty-fifth of what remains to be granted. On the island, in this state of cultivation, are employed, according to his information, (confirmed in this respect by the papers on the table,) 10,000 negroes. The simplest way then of ascertaining the number required to cultivate the remainder, will be to multiply the number already in the island by twenty-five. The result is 250,000. This calculation, however, (large as it may appear to gentlemen), is less than will be found to be the result of a comparison of Trinidad with the island of Jamaica. In Jamaica, in the year 1791, there were about one million of acres in cultivation, of which about 350,000 in sugar (the remainder in the minor staples, coffee, cotton, &c. and in provision grounds, &c. for the supply of the sugar estates); Jamaica at that time contained

upwards of 250,000, perhaps nearer 300,000 negroes. The proportion of sugar cultivation being taken in each instance as the criterion of the requisite negro population, it will hardly be thought an exaggerated statement, if when Jamaica, for 350,000 acres of sugar, employed, say only 250,000 negroes, I consider only the same number as required for 420,000 sugar acres in Trinidad. In fact, I might assume a much larger number; and for the data on which I proceed with respect to Jamaica, I desire to observe that I rely for the most part on the statements of Mr. Bryan Edwards (a gentleman, of whose memory I mean to speak with great respect, and of whose support to the present motion, (had he been still living,) I should have felt myself very confident, so much impressed was that gentleman with the conviction that the system of negro colonies had been pushed already to an extent beyond which it could not go without imminent danger). I take Mr. Edwards's statements, though certainly below the truth, in respect to the negro population, in preference to those of the report of the Privy Council, which would justify me in a much larger calculation; both because Mr. Edwards's being lower, he was the less liable to a suspicion of exaggeration in choosing them, and because, being before the public, there was the better opportunity for every gentleman who wished it, to follow him in

his deductions, and to correct him if he was wrong. 250,000, then, is the least amount of negroes, required for cultivating the projected allotments of Trinidad. But is this all? Nothing like it. The question is not as to cultivating only, but as to clearing and bringing into cultivation, into sudden cultivation, if the whole were to be disposed of, according to the plan in contemplation, to the best bidder at one time. It has required a century and a half to bring Jamaica to its present state of cultivation. Is it to be supposed that, at the present day, with such a command of capital, with the spirit of enterprise so much alive, Trinidad will be brought into cultivation so gradually? Certainly not.

But in this gradual progression, what was the amount of the importations from Africa which had been required to cultivate Jamaica? Of this, for a certain portion of the time, for eighty-seven years, from the beginning of the last century, Mr. Edwards gave a statement, which he (Mr. E.) averred to be correct. In the year 1673, the negroes in Jamaica were 9,400 in number, within a trifle the same number that the papers on the table assign to Trinidad. In the year 1791 they amounted to 250,000, the number required for Trinidad. From the year 1700 to 1787, the numbers imported from Africa amounted to 610,000. In Jamaica, therefore, there had been required a recruit of 610,000 (without reckoning any thing for the

years preceding 1700, or subsequent to 1787), in addition to the natural increase upon the island, to bring up a population of 9,400 gradually to 250,000. Add to this computation the immensely increased mortality from pushing the cultivation of Trinidad with the rapidity with which it would be pushed by purchasers anxious to turn their capital as quickly as possible; add the waste of lives in clearing new lands (the most unwholesome and destructive part of the agriculture of the West Indies), and from employing newly-imported and unseasoned negroes (another infallible cause of aggravated mortality); and if with these additions I assume one million of negroes as the lowest amount that would be to be imported from Africa before Trinidad was as effectually cleared and cultivated as Jamaica, I am persuaded that I cannot be accused of exaggerating the calculation. One million of human beings to be swept from the face of the earth! And for what purpose?—to gratify what interest?—to comply with what necessity? There is no pretence of necessity; and the interests which have in all former instances been associated with the continuance and extension of the Slave Trade, in this instance are entirely the other way; I mean the interests of the established West India planters.

I have before said, that if I failed in my appeal to the consistency of the West Indians,

who brought forward the address of 1797, I could successfully appeal to their interests. But I will not suppose that I have failed: I believe, I may say that I know them to be ready to redeem their pledge, to stand the test of this day's vote. I will, therefore, direct my argument respecting their interests, not to them, but to those gentlemen unconnected with the West Indies themselves, who have yet always made West Indian interests the plea and pretence for their votes in favour of the Slave Trade. This day affords a test of their sincerity also. Is it indeed true, that they have always hitherto been compelled to give a reluctant consent to the continuance of the Slave Trade, only because they felt themselves bound in justice to take care that the vested interests of the colonists should receive no injury by a hasty abolition? Did they endure an evil they abhorred, only because its continuance was indispensably necessary for the protection of an interest which they regarded? What then will be their plea now? now that the interests of the established West Indian are to be prejudiced by the very same act that created an enormous extension of the evil? now that the only effect of increasing the Slave Trade by the cultivation of Trinidad will be, to raise up rival establishments to meet the old colonists in the market?—But, perhaps, such a rivalry is rendered peculiarly desirable by

some change which has taken place in the state of the markets at home and abroad, by some dearth of West Indian produce, which must be remedied, by some sudden inflammation of West Indian prices, which must be reduced by the necessity of raising a revenue from sugar beyond what it at present afforded! These would indeed be poor justifications for the abandonment of principles so broadly stated, and for the forfeiture of pledges so solemnly recorded. But what is the fact? Precisely the reverse in every particular. The quantity of West Indian produce in the home market far beyond the demand; the markets of Europe shut against us; the prices, in consequence, so low as to be almost ruinous to the planter; and the duties so far from being likely to flow into the Exchequer in greater amount, that they are now obliged to be bonded. I do not mean to say that all this may not change and right itself in time; that the markets of Europe may not re-open, the glut find vent, and the prices rise; but I apply my argument to the now state of things, to the existing interests of the present race of West Indians, of those whose immediate interests have always been found powerful enough with the House to defeat all measures for the diminution of the Slave Trade; and I must ask, when those same interests are found in opposition to the increase of that evil, by what arguments they are to be prevented from

having the same effect? Would you increase the Slave Trade? would you prejudice the West Indian interest, in order to feed a market already glutted, to lower prices already ruinous to the seller, and to swell a revenue which you are already obliged to bond? In truth, there is now no pretence of interest, none of necessity, in favour of an increased cultivation of West Indian produce, at the price of an increased Slave Trade. If we consent to the increase of the Slave Trade for such a purpose at this moment, we do an act not only of voluntary wickedness, but of individual injustice.

It may be asked of those who have, at different times, rejected the plea of West Indian interest when urged in favour of the Slave Trade, how it happens that they now become the advocates of those interests? For this plain reason, that our hostility was always directed against the Slave Trade, not against the interests connected, or supposed to be connected, with it. And very happy I am, for one, that an opportunity has occurred of putting our sincerity, in this respect, to the test. For myself I can truly say, that if the greatest possible degree of affection and esteem for individuals be a tie of respect and regard for the body to which those individuals belong, there is no body of men to whom I am less likely to feel any thing like personal hostility than the body of West India proprietors, as there is none which contains individuals whom I love and value more

highly. But when their supposed (or, as I should say, mistaken) interests came in competition with a great moral and political good, I did not give them the preference. True. But when I find them on the same side, shall it not be an additional incitement to me to endeavour to work that good which now involves, not opposes, the interests of that body of men?—Let us now apply the same test to those moderate men who have hitherto supported the West Indian interest and the Slave Trade together. As long as they went together, all was well. The Slave Trade was to be tolerated, because its ally, the West Indian interest, was to be supported. But the alliance is now dissolved: the West Indian interest points one way, the Slave Trade another. Which will you follow? No disguise—no equivocation now. It is not Slave Trade *and*, but Slave Trade *or*, the old West Indian interest, that you must support: —Slave Trade in all its naked charms, without the cloak of a pretended West Indian interest to hide them. If, in this choice, you take that road which leads to the enormous increase of the evil which you pretended to deplore, and abandon the interests for whose sake alone you pretended, while you deplored, to endure it, what shall be said? What can be believed, but that your affected tenderness for the colonists was all mere hypocrisy; and that, at all times, in all periods of the discussion, while regard for colonial interests

was on your lips, the secret devotions of your hearts were paid to the Slave Trade? Or will it be avowed, that at the time when these professions were made, we were, indeed, sincere in intending to act up to them, but that we did not then foresee the temptation to which we should be exposed; that we were prepared for common exertions of forbearance; we could have suffered a corner of an old island to lie waste, without thinking too much of the sacrifice to consistency; but that the present temptation is beyond our strength; the fine black mould and watered savannahs of Trinidad hold out incitements which flesh and blood cannot resist, and almost justify a breach of our bond, of which flesh and blood, God knows to what amount, must pay the penalty? Sir, I consider the acquisition of Trinidad in a different light. It seems to me as if Providence had determined to put to the trial our boasts of speculative benevolence and intended humanity, by putting into our power a colony where, if we pursue our old course, it must be purely for its own sake, without the old inducements or the usual apologies. This day is a day of tests: I trust we shall all abide the trial.

I now come to consider the second division of the subject. In a wider view, and considered as in relation to the general security and stability of our colonial system, and to the national policy of the country, how far will it be prudent, let me

ask, to convert Trinidad at once into a sugar colony, to be cultivated by the same means with the others, subject to the same dangers, and partaking of the same weakness and insecurity? Is it possible to look at the present state of the colonial world without feeling considerable awe and apprehension? The struggle now subsisting in St. Domingo, whichever way it may terminate, cannot but be productive of great evil and danger to our colonies: in the one event, a great moral danger, if the negroes should not be thoroughly subdued; in the other case, of complete success to the French arms, a great military danger. In either of these events, what is the use to which it will be most desirable to have turned our new acquisition? Will the moral danger be best guarded against by having established a new negro colony, by immense importations from Africa? Will the military safety of Trinidad be best ascertained by a population from which, in the time of attack, you will have as much to dread as from the enemy; a population which, while you defend it with one hand, you must keep down with the other? I will not dwell upon these topics, because I am aware that they are too delicate to be agitated much at large in public discussion. But enough surely appears to any reasoning mind, on the first glance at the present situation and prospects of the West Indies, to prove beyond doubt, that strength, not

sugar,—that to fence and support, not to extend, with proportionate extension of weakness, our possessions in that quarter of the globe, is the obvious dictate of policy, is equally necessary for the preservation of the colonies, whether to themselves or to the mother country. In Trinidad, therefore, above all things, we ought to look for strength and solidity; we ought to make it, in the first instance, a strong military post, a naval station, a place of recruit and refreshment for our fleets and armies. It ought to be used not as a new venture upon a speculation already hazardous and overloaded, but to protect and ensure those which we have already at stake. Wealth, to be sure, is strength to a certain degree, inasmuch as it furnishes the means of exertion; but to protect the existing sources of the wealth which we now enjoy, is the first object; to widen the channel in which it is to flow may be a proper and desirable object hereafter. Strength once established, wealth will naturally follow; but if, with a blind and mistaken cupidity, we hurry on to increase the produce of our colonies, without previously adding to their security, the result may very probably be, to lose even that of which we are already in possession.

If, in looking to the state of the colonies a few years ago, and foreseeing the dangers to which they are now exposed, I had been disposed to form a wish for that which should be most essen-

tial to our preservation, I know not what more I could have desired than that which now the chance of war has thrown into our hands; an island, such as Trinidad, fertile in its soil, with opportunity of naval station, and so situated in respect to the other colonies, as to afford, under most circumstances, the means of quick succour and assistance; and, above all, not so far gone in the old Slave Trade system, but that a new mode of colonization may be tried there with fair probability of success. Had I formed such a wish, and had any person less confident in the wisdom of parliament than I was, remarked to me at the time, "You shall have what you de-" sire; an island precisely such as you describe " shall fall into your hands; but, mark my words, " no sooner will you be in possession of it, than all " your fine schemes of wholesome colonization will " be abandoned; you will turn to your commercial " dictionary, and there finding, under the head " West India island, the word *sugar*, and under " sugar the word *slave*, you will look no farther; " sugar cultivation and slave trade will comprize " the whole of your boasted policy, and Trinidad " will be cleared and cultivated by labour from " Africa, like all your other settlements, and " brought, as quickly as possible, to the same " state of wealth and of weakness that belongs " to them." Had any man ventured to predict that such would be the only use to which an

acquisition like Trinidad would be converted, I should have resented the insinuation as utterly unfounded. I should have abjured for parliament, and for the government of the country, so poor and vulgar a notion of policy as that of, under all the changes of moral and political circumstances, pursuing exactly the same system of colonial establishment, without reference to what may be required for new security under increased danger. "Government," I should have said, "will not be blind to the new circum-
"stances of the colonies and of the world.
"They will see that internal strength is that
"which is wanting to their colonial system.
"They will endeavour to procure it by laying
"the basis, in their new colony, of a natural
"population, which is alone the great cure for
"all the evils that are suffered, and all that are
"apprehended in that quarter of the world."
This is what I should have ventured to undertake for on the part of any government of this country; and this is what I now call upon the House of Commons to do their part towards performing, by interposing to prevent an immediate alienation of the lands of Trinidad.

If I were to be asked by what means I thought a natural population could be procured, I would answer, first, by not introducing an artificial one; by not pouring the population of Africa into the forests and morasses of Trinidad,

to perish yearly, and yearly to be supplied by fresh importations. This system once adopted, it is hopeless to look for any other. Keep clear of this, and it is possible that the foundation of another system may be laid. The second means are also negative. Do not make large grants or sales to great capitalists. Look for your settlers among classes of men who will be induced to become residents in the island. Such may be to be found among the meritorious soldiers of regiments on West India service, among foreign corps, among free blacks and creoles in the other islands; to all of whom encouragement should be held out by grants of land, such as would enable them to maintain themselves and their families in a state of moderate independence. If it were objected that European labour was altogether incompetent to the climate; I answer, for the cultivation of the great staple commodities of West Indian produce, certainly; but not for raising vegetables; not for breeding cattle; modes of agriculture which may make Trinidad the source of health and comfort to the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain employed in the defence of the West Indies, and, in some measure, to the colonies themselves.

But neither are these all the materials for settling the island. There are, if I am not much misinformed, other materials peculiar to Trinidad. There is a race of labourers in the habit of resort-

ing annually to that island from the neighbouring continent, to work for hire in the most arduous and fatiguing branches of colonial husbandry. They are called Peons; stout, active, inured to the climate, and capable (as is supposed) of being induced, by proper encouragement, to come over in still more considerable numbers; and, no doubt, if proper means of subsistence were afforded them, to settle themselves and their families in Trinidad. From this race might be created a hardy native militia, fitted, to a degree that European constitutions perhaps hardly ever attain, to endure the fatigue and difficulties of West Indian warfare. The right honourable gentlemen below me (the ministers) have better means than I can be supposed to have, of knowing how far the description which I have been giving of these persons is correct; but I have no doubt of it, and if true, there is a basis for creole colonization, which I should be extremely sorry not to have tried to the fullest extent. The advantages to be derived from it, under certain possible circumstances in the political state of South America, are incalculable; but such as in this place it would not be proper to dwell upon in detail. There is, besides, another race, peculiar, I believe, at this moment, to Trinidad, native Indians, to the number (according to the papers upon the table) of about one thousand; a people whom, if it were from no better motive than curiosity, I should be

sorry not to have carefully preserved, "*reliquiæ et Danaúm*," the remnant of nations among whom the sword, and the spit, and the rack, and the mine, have made such horrible ravages. These whom, by some unaccountable oversight, the Spaniards had neglected to exterminate, might, and would no doubt keep up an increasing native population. One thousand, to be sure, is not a great number; but it is not contemptible, as a source of colonial inhabitancy: it is as large as the number of whites on some of the smaller islands; it is one-seventh part of the whole population of Trinidad (exclusive of negro slaves) when the island came into our possession, and it bears a proportion of almost one-seventieth part to the whole European population of all our islands put together. Add to this, that the numbers of the sexes are pretty equal (the females rather the more numerous), and there is little reason to apprehend that this race may not be kept up and extended to a very considerable degree.

Now, Sir, I do not say here is your colony established: but I do say, here are means and chances for the establishment of a guiltless, bloodless colony, which it would be highly perverse and criminal to throw away untried, from a blind preference to the old method of annual importation from Africa, with such accumulation of misery, and such risk of mischief as must attend them. Let me not be answered that all expe-

rience is against me; that there is no instance of a West India island having been cultivated, except by negro slaves. I will not too hastily believe that there is any region in the earth on which Providence has laid that heavy interdiction, that it shall not suffice to produce its own inhabitancy, that it cannot be fertilized, except by the blood of victims from another quarter of the globe. I deny the fact, that experience is against me. Has the experiment of a native population ever yet been tried, and failed? Never. Try it now—try it before you make its impracticability a plea for establishing a system of guilt and rapine, which, even if every other resource should fail, is detestable; and if it has not that excuse, if it is not tried in the last resort, is as wanton as it is shocking to humanity. That in this way you will not get as large a produce of sugar to swell the Custom-house entries of the next few years, I grant you. But are you to raise a sum of money, or to found a colony? Would you lay a foundation for the returns of a twelvemonth, or for the greatness of an age? I hope, the latter. Nor, however, will Trinidad yield nothing in the mean time. Many of the means which I have pointed out are applicable to raising colonial produce in its common acceptation. But Trinidad has yet other facilities which make it sufficiently valuable, even if not a hogshead of sugar should be produced, nor the hand of a negro employed upon it. Look at its

situation in respect to the Spanish Main. Is it possible that the court of Spain, in making such a cession to us, should not have considered well the policy of its present restrictions on colonial commerce, and the encouragement to clandestine trade which arises out of them? Is it improbable that the result of such a consideration, aided by the suggestions of the government of this country, should be, to produce a freer intercourse and a more liberal system of commercial regulations? and, in such case, what advantages might we not expect from Trinidad becoming the emporium of British and South American commerce? There are yet other advantages which do not depend on foreign co-operation. It has been matter of constant dispute between the colonists and those who have in this country contended for limitations on the Slave Trade, whether or not such improvements might be made in the colonial agriculture, as would diminish the necessity for importations of labourers from Africa? The colonists have said, with some justice, that they would be willing and desirous that the fact should be ascertained; but that they cannot afford to hazard a year's returns in trying experiments. Here then is the opportunity of trying them at the expense, not of individuals, but of the public. Who knows what skill and machinery might do to lessen negro labour? The first consequences to the other colonies would be

gradual improvement, by the silent operation of example, without the shock of innovation, or the risk of loss ; the further and more enlarged consequences would be, a gradual abolition of the Slave Trade produced without any other interference, by a gradual diminution of the demand for slaves; a diminution, in a still greater degree, of the great and dangerous disproportion of blacks and whites at present in the islands; a saving of British capital, and an economy of human life. These are not slight advantages, nor would Trinidad be ill employed, if turned to this account only. But this I do not ask you now to decide. I ask you to pause, to allow yourselves time for deliberation. I ask you only not to decide that you will try nothing but Slave Trade. If in the end you must come to that, if you are determined to do so, should every thing else fail, Africa is always at hand: you can never be too late in your resort to the market for her miserable inhabitants. But you are not justified in resorting to it till you have tried, I do not say all the means I have suggested, but all that wiser and abler men, thinking deeply, and devoting themselves to the subject, can devise; and if tried heartily, depend upon it such means will not fail.

I have now only to add, by way of explanation of a single paragraph in the address which I am about to move, that I have been desirous of providing against the only practical objection to which

I can conceive my motion to be liable, by excepting from the general prohibition of grants or sales of new lands in Trinidad, such grants as Government might wish to be able to make to those inhabitants of the colonies, restored by the late treaty to the French and Batavian republics, who were desirous of remaining under British protection. To them I would leave it open for government to make grants; but to them under condition of not cultivating those grants by negroes imported from Africa. I go on the presumption that they will be allowed, under the stipulations of the treaty, to bring their negroes with them from their present establishments to Trinidad. I have only further to observe, that the restriction which the address proposes is only to keep the subject open until Parliament shall have had an opportunity of considering it fully, and to ensure that the Government shall lay it fully before them. I then move "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, humbly to represent to His Majesty, that, in consideration of the great importance of preventing the dangers and mischiefs which must arise from the excessive increase of the importation of negroes from Africa, if such importation should be permitted, without restriction, into the island of Trinidad; and for the purpose of avoiding any colour or pretext, by reason of new grants, to obstruct hereafter any regulations which, to the wisdom of Parliament,

may, after due investigation and deliberation, seem expedient; His Majesty's faithful Commons humbly request His Majesty, that he will not authorise any grants or sales of new lands in the island of Trinidad, without express condition (under penalty of forfeiting and making void such grants or sales), that no negro to be thenceforth imported from Africa shall be employed on the said lands, until opportunity shall have been afforded to Parliament to make such provision as the circumstances of the case may be found to require, for the prohibition, limitation, or regulation, of the importation of negroes from Africa into the said island:—That His Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions, that there shall be laid before this House, in the next session of Parliament, an account of any such conditional grants and sales, as may have been made in the interval; and of the means which have been employed or provided, for enforcing the due observation and performance of the said condition;—And that His Majesty will be graciously pleased further to direct, that there shall be laid before this House, so soon as the same can be prepared, such plan of regulations as to His Majesty's Government may appear most advisable for promoting the cultivation or improvement of the island of Trinidad, in the manner the least likely to interfere with the wish expressed by this House for the gradual diminution and ultimate termination of the African

Slave Trade, and the most conducive to the stability and security of the interests of the colonies, and of the West Indian commerce of this kingdom."

Mr. Sturges seconded the motion.

Mr. Chancellor Addington expressed regret that the motion should be made at this time. He knew there were some who thought that the subject, as far as it related to Trinidad, might be taken as an insulated point, but this was not the way in which he viewed the subject; he thought it difficult to make a distinction between the policy observed towards this particular island, and the general policy of the trade carried on by means of negroes in the West Indies, and did not see how this question could be fairly discussed without entering upon the question at large. And here he should observe, in passing, that it was a matter of some surprise to him that a proposition of this sort should be brought forward so recently after the island had come into the hands of His Majesty, although the general question upon the trade, to which the proposition referred, had been allowed to sleep for five or six years. The proposition now before the House, brought with it no recommendation, either to those who thought that the African trade ought to be immediately, or to those who thought it should be gradually abolished; for it was not essentially favourable to either. It did not follow that the Slave Trade would be abolished or even lessened by confining a vote to the island of Trinidad. An attempt to prevent negroes from being imported from the coast of Africa into Trinidad would be only to ensure

the carrying on of the trade in other quarters. The effect of the proposition would be to call for negroes from the different West India islands to Trinidad; because, without such assistance, it would be impossible to carry on the necessary trade there; and it would create a chasm in those islands which could not be supplied but by means of fresh importations from Africa;—therefore, the discouragement of importations to Trinidad alone would not answer the purpose in view; for unless we could discourage importation in all the islands, it was useless to prohibit it in one. He entertained a hope that the subject of the Slave Trade would be taken up in the course of the next session, and considered deliberately upon the principle of a gradual abolition of that traffic. The description which he had received of the peculiar advantages of the island of Trinidad, had rendered the matter peculiarly interesting; so much so, that His Majesty's Government had determined some time since to send out a commission, for the purpose of making a minute survey of it. Positive orders had been sent out by Government, that no new grants or sales of land in Trinidad should take place without further authority. He hoped that every public encouragement would be given to the population of the whites and creoles. The House had declared that the Slave Trade should be abolished by gradual means; that was a proceeding to which he was a party—it was one to which the faith of Parliament was pledged. In whatever might be done upon the subject to which the motion of the right honourable gentleman had immediate reference, His Majesty's Government would consider diligently the report

of the commissioners; at the same time he could not be expected to pledge himself to lay before the House any plan upon this subject. In the hope that none of the evils which the right honourable gentleman apprehended would arise from a short delay, he should conclude with moving the previous question.

Mr. Canning said:—If, Sir, the right honourable gentleman had contented himself with only making the latter half of his speech, I would cheerfully have consented to withdraw my motion: because, in the pledges and intentions of himself and his colleagues, he has not only given me all that my motion asks, but more. I understand from him, that not only no grants or sales of land shall be made in Trinidad, (except such as the address, which I have the honour to propose to you, itself excepted), until Parliament shall have had an opportunity of considering the subject; but that there is a fixed and serious determination on the part of the executive Government to revise and discuss fully, with a view to a final settlement, the whole of that great moral and political question, which has been discussed for twelve years in this House to so little purpose. With the hopes that are now held out to me of this attention being speedily given to the subject, and having the solemn word of the right honourable

gentleman, that the object of my motion shall be answered, I am not desirous of pressing it to a division. For the same reason, I will not make any of those comments on the first part of the right honourable gentleman's speech which I think it deserves. I will only observe, that if my motion has had the effect of producing the public declarations and pledges which we have just heard from the right honourable gentleman, I conceive it to have been highly beneficial. I cannot think it so ill-timed, or so ill-judged, as he has endeavoured to represent it. And the right honourable gentleman must excuse me for saying, that it is in consequence of some insinuations and misrepresentations in that speech, that I feel it necessary to persist in desiring that the address may be recorded on the Journals.

General Gascoyne opposed the motion. He thought it necessary for the support of our colonies that the Slave Trade should be increased, instead of being abolished.

Mr. Wilberforce observed, that he was satisfied with the personal declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, believing he was sincere, and anxious to act up to his professions. He was of opinion that our Government ought immediately to enter into a negociation with foreign Powers, for the abolition of the Slave Trade. He should bring the subject before the House during the present session.

The previous question was then put and carried.

ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

DECEMBER 8th, 1802.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, to which the Army Estimates were referred:—

The Secretary at War (Right Honourable C. Yorke) rose to state the reasons why the Estimates, now on the table, exceeded, in number and expence, any thing that this country had known in any former period of peace. The main question for the decision of the House was, whether the circumstances of the present times were such as to render such a force as was now proposed necessary? and if this should be decided in the affirmative, it would then remain to determine whether the division and description of the force were the most eligible, and whether its distribution were such as was best accommodated to the exigencies of the public service? The overgrown power of France, arrived to a magnitude beyond that which the ambition of Louis XIV. projected; the menacing attitude of that country; the ambition and enterprise of its present government, must satisfy the mind of every man, that in the present time a larger force was necessary for the security of Great Britain than at former periods of peace. Our navy alone, however great, was not sufficient to guard the whole extent of our possessions, widely as they were spread through every quarter of the globe. It would be sufficient to remind the committee, that France was now in possession of the Netherlands, of Holland, of the course of the Maese and

the Lower Rhine, and the fortresses on the banks of these rivers. This was the first time Parliament had been called upon to vote a peace establishment under such circumstances, and in such a relative position as she now stood towards France.—The right honourable gentleman proceeded to show the necessity of an increased military establishment, from the great military force of France, which he computed to consist of 929,000 effective men, liable to be called out at the command of the French government. If it was deemed necessary in times of no danger to keep up 24,000 men, surely it would not be deemed unnecessary, or unconstitutional, or unadvisable, in these times of difficulty and danger, to maintain a greater number. According to the best information that could be collected from the most authentic sources, 100,000 men were the number sufficient for the security of the country, and fewer were deemed insufficient. Under present circumstances, the maintenance of that number surely could not be deemed impolitic. The right honourable gentleman then entered into a detail of the proportion of cavalry and infantry forces to be kept up, and their distribution, specifying the number which was to serve respectively in Great Britain and Ireland, in the plantations, and in India. The militia of Great Britain and Ireland were discharged, to the amount of 71,000 men. It was understood that the militia was always to be called out at the commencement of a war, and discharged on the commencement of peace. Besides, we had an easy resource in the militia of Ireland of 20,000 men more, exclusive of the yeomanry and volunteer corps, who

had agreed to continue their services. Putting all together, we had a total force of 200,000 men, exclusive of the army in India; a force of such a magnitude, and of such a description, as to present no very alluring prospect to any foreign power that may be disposed to attack us. He concluded by moving the first resolution—"That 66,574 men be voted, for guards and garrisons in Ireland, from the 25th of December, 1802, to the 24th of December, 1803."

An animated discussion ensued on this resolution, which was opposed by Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Fox, and supported by Earl Temple, Sir Eyre Coote, Mr. Archdale, General Maitland, General Tarleton, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Addington, Mr. Windham, and by Mr. Sheridan, in a speech full of energy, and abounding in oratorical beauties, of the highest merit, and of the most tasteful and felicitous adaptation.

Mr. Canning rose and said:—I feel, Sir, all the disadvantage under which I rise, to claim, for a short time, the attention of the committee, while they are yet warm with those impressions of admiration and delight which must have been excited in the minds of all who hear me, by the speech just delivered by my honourable friend.* And were it not that that speech contained some allusions pointed personally to me, upon which I am particularly anxious to have as early an opportunity as possible of offering a few observations,

* Mr. Sheridan.

I should certainly have better consulted my own interest, than to expose myself to a comparison by which I must be so great a sufferer. This consolation, however, I have for the danger and difficulty of the situation in which I stand up to address you (and to me, with the feelings of personal kindness and regard which subsist between my honourable friend and myself, it is no small consolation), that if I am the first to encounter the hazard of so perilous a contrast, I am also the first who have the opportunity of expressing in words, those sentiments which I am persuaded I feel only in common with every man in the House, sentiments, not of satisfaction only, but of thankfulness for the part which my honourable friend has this day taken; a part which he has taken this day not for the first time; for it is surely in the recollection of the House, it is most certainly in the recollection of the country, at how many other periods of public embarrassment and anxiety in the course of the last eventful and tremendous years, my honourable friend, throwing aside all petty distinctions of party feeling, has come forward, often under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, often discouraged, always alone, as the champion of his country's rights and interests, and has rallied the hearts and spirits of the nation. At this time, indeed, such an exertion was peculiarly necessary. Never was a moment at which it was so desirable to recall the attention, and revive the courage of the House, and to present to

them a true picture of their situation; of the dangers which impend over us, and of the exertions by which we must be prepared to meet them. I trust we shall now hear no more of those miserable systems, the object of which is, not to rouse us to ward off our ruin, but to reconcile us to submit to it. I trust we shall hear no more of those weak, fallacious, and degrading hopes which have been held out, not to inspirit, but to relax the exertions of the country; hopes founded on the calculation of what the chapter of accidents (as it is called) may produce, to favour our escape from a destruction, which we are taught that it is in vain to endeavour to resist; hopes founded sometimes on the possibility of Buonaparte's death, before his plans for our subjugation are brought to maturity; sometimes on the probability of changes in France, on the very magnitude of the French empire, which, it seems, affords a sure presage of its downfall (yes, of its downfall, perhaps some century hence, when we may long have made a subordinate part of it!); lastly, hopes of what unknown and unthought-of things time or chance may effect for us, and for the world! Oh! contemptible substitutes for rational precaution and manly readiness! Time and chance can do nothing for those who will do nothing for themselves! Providence itself (if it were not impious to assign limits to Omnipotence) can scarcely save a people who are not prepared to make a struggle for their own safety. And then, Sir, the systems that

have been recommended to us! recommended too from high authority, the authority of great abilities, and of popular and respectable names!— "We have nothing to dread from France but a rivalry in commerce," says the honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox). Look round, Sir, on the state of the world, and can such an argument, even from such a man, need farther refutation? "We may be safe and happy, if we will but keep to ourselves," says an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Wilberforce), of whom I am sure I mean to speak with every profession of that respect and esteem which his character claims; "if we will abjure the continent; if, shut up in our own island, safe within the surrounding impassable barrier of the sea, we confine our attention to objects immediately concerning our own comfort and happiness, and cultivate the arts of peace, unmolesting and unmolested." True, if unmolested; but these pictures of flowing felicity, these exhortations to inoffensive quiet, do they suit the times to which they are applied? or will not my honourable friend condescend to consider their practical possibility, before he shuts us out from any other chance of safety, but what is to be found in our own disposition to repose? Happy times, indeed, if they ever shall come, when we can realize these dreams of independent and unconnected security, when we can do without any intercourse with the corrupt nations of the continent, wretches whose territories are separated

from each other by no other barriers than mountains and rivers, and who are consequently unfit for any intercourse with a pure insulated people like ourselves! Then shall the din of war never reach our tranquil shores! Then, instead of traversing the boisterous ocean, at the imminent hazard of their lives, our sailors shall be raised, for peaceful purposes, on the margins of duck-ponds, and the towing-paths of canals! But till this millennium does arrive, in God's name, Sir, let us look about us! Let us consider the state of the world as it is, not as we fancy it ought to be! Let us not seek to hide from our own eyes, or to diminish in the eyes of those who look to our deliberations for information, the real, imminent, and awful danger which threatens us, from the overgrown power, the insolent spirit, and still more, the implacable hatred of our natural rivals and enemies! Let us not amuse ourselves with vain notions, that our greatness and our happiness, as a nation, are capable of being separated. It is no such thing. The choice is not in our power. We have, as my honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) has well observed, no refuge in littleness. We must maintain ourselves what we are, or cease to have a political existence worth preserving.

Such, Sir, is the view of our situation, which we are now called upon to take; such the tone and temper in which we must deliberate upon it, if we would deliberate to any purpose. And for recaling us to that tone, for shaming that danger-

ous and delusive mixture of whining despondency and false security which for the last two or three nights have been gradually gaining the ascendancy in our debates, my honourable friend has my thanks; he has rendered, in so doing, an essential service to his country. His speech, coming from the quarter from which it came, has done incalculable good. Let not my honourable friend suppose I grudge him the merit and the fame which belong to such a display of talents, when I add, that I lament that such a speech did not proceed from the mouth of a minister. Language like his, in the mouths of the administration at this crisis, would, in my opinion, have done more than fleets and armies to ward off the attack of a foreign enemy, and to animate and maintain the spirit and energy of the people; but from that quarter we have looked for such declarations in vain. And this leads me, Sir, to that part of my honourable friend's speech, in which, agreeing cordially as I do in the general sentiment which pervades the whole, I find myself under the necessity of differing from him. He has stated it as a matter of grave imputation against those who, like myself, are ready to vote for every measure of defence and preparation that the minister may think proper to propose, that while we concur in such measures, we do not withhold expressions of distrust or disapprobation of the general conduct and system of policy of those who propose them.

It is argued as if there were something uncandid in not giving confidence to the government, at the moment when the particular subject of debate is one on which you agree with them. Now, Sir, I am, on the contrary, of the opinion which has been so well expressed and so well defended, by an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Cartwright) who spoke early in this debate, that it would be much more uncandid and unfair to conceal your general sentiments, at the moment when you are expressing partial approbation. In times of more regular and marshalled party, indeed, all such reserve or qualification is wholly unnecessary. It is understood without explanation, that the general combined sense of those who usually act together either influences their vote upon each particular question (I am not defending the system, I am only stating it); or that if upon any particular question that uniform influence is suspended, the suspension is limited to the occasion, and the general sentiment of partiality or distrust remains unimpaired. Such, Sir, was the case with the gentlemen who sit opposite to me (the old Opposition) during the whole of the last war; with this difference, indeed, that I do not remember a single instance in which they happened to think the minister right, in which, even in the most perilous moments of external difficulty, or internal disquiet, they, even upon any one occasion, suspended the inveteracy of their parliamentary opposition. But

if, now the state of things is changed, if (whether to the advantage or detriment of the country I will not now discuss) the system of regular combination and marshalled parties is at an end; if individuals are called upon to decide upon measures as they arise, on their own individual and conscientious judgments; is it to be imputed as blame to men so judging, and acting conscientiously upon their opinions, that they limit the opinions which they give, to the occasion which calls for them? and that approving, for instance of the armament, because they, in their view of the state of the world, think it indispensably necessary, but disapproving of the mode in which that necessity is stated, or rather is not stated, to parliament and the country, they avow one of these sentiments as freely as the other? What would gentlemen have? Would they have us do the converse of what we are doing, and disapprove of the armament itself, however necessary it may appear to us, because we cannot approve of the manner in which it has been proposed, or be satisfied with the grounds that have been laid for it? Would they have us do this? This was the conduct of the late Opposition. But I trust there is not a man with whom I have the honour to agree in opinion, who would not reject with abhorrence any suggestion to act so dishonourable a part. No, Sir, we are not ready, whatever we may think of the counsels by which we have been

brought into our present danger; whatever we may think of our chance of being extricated from it by the same counsels; we are not therefore ready to obstruct even those counsels in any thing confessedly directed to that end; we are not therefore ready to deliver our common country defenceless into the possession of an enemy.

But my honourable friend, taking under his powerful protection a ministry so hardly used as he describes the present ministry to be, complains that the unfairness lies in this; that while the approbation of their measures is specific, the expressions of distrust are vague and general; conveying no distinct accusation, pointed at no particular part of their conduct, and evincing only a fastidious dislike of their persons, not founded on any reasonable objection, nor supported by any intelligible charge. Sir, let others speak for themselves; for myself, I can most confidently say, and had my honourable friend happened to be present on any former night of debate, he would have borne me witness, that not one word personal to the right honourable gentleman below me (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) or his colleagues has escaped my lips; except indeed a few words on the last night of debate, expressive of the personal good will, and sincere and unaltered regard which I bear to one of them, the noble secretary of state (lord Hawkesbury); by which expressions I testified, I trust in no niggardly or

reluctant manner, the satisfaction with which I heard from him (and I did hear with real satisfaction) the only speech that any of His Majesty's ministers have yet made, in a tone at all suited to the circumstances of the times and of the country. But that I have arraigned the conduct, that I have pointed out what appeared to me to be gross blunders and mismanagement in the policy of the administration in respect to foreign affairs, that I have made no charge, without stating the grounds of it in the best way that I was able, I would appeal to my honourable friend himself, if he had been present in the House, and I do appeal to all those whom I may have had the honour of addressing on those occasions. My argument may have been good, or bad; convincing, or frivolous; my view of the points to which I took the liberty of calling the attention of the House on the first day of the session, may have been just or false; my charges of misconduct well made out, or proved to be unfounded: for this I am no otherwise responsible, than that I spoke nothing but what I was myself honestly persuaded was the truth; and what is more, every thing that I alleged remains to this hour unanswered. But that I did not indulge in random imputations, I do most positively affirm. I stated, Sir, (but let not the House suppose that I am about to wrong them by going through the particulars of my argument

again), I stated my firm persuasion, that by their mismanagement of affairs at the court of St. Petersburg, ministers had detached the Emperor of Russia from his alliance with Great Britain, and driven him out of the line of policy which he had laid down for himself, into the arms of France; that by refusing to interest themselves for the King of Sardinia, they had lost him Piedmont: that this very refusal had been that which above all other things, perhaps, had disgusted and alienated the Emperor of Russia; and that they had therefore most ingeniously contrived, at one cast as it were, to throw away the dominions of one ally, and the friendship of another. I stated, that after having made these sacrifices, from fear of France, and in order to avoid any ground of difference with Buonaparte, they had all of a sudden absurdly and unnecessarily departed from this system of policy, such as it was, and by their rash, ill-timed, ill-considered, and ill-supported remonstrance in behalf of Switzerland, had committed the honour of this country, with no other effect than to precipitate and aggravate the misfortunes of the people for whom they interfered; and that the honour of the country so committed had never been redeemed.

I stated all this, Sir, as the *primà facie* case against the ministers, arising out of circumstances of public notoriety, and such as any man who takes the trouble to read the

newspapers of the day could not avoid observing: and I challenged ministers, if they had any unknown circumstance to bring forward in contradiction, or in extenuation, to bring it forward in answer to what I said, but this challenge has never been accepted. Sir, from this silence I did infer, and do infer, that the case is nearly as I have stated it. And I now assert, that by this conduct ministers have not entitled themselves to my general confidence; however, I may not disapprove of particular measures which they or any other men in their situation could not hesitate to adopt in such a state of the world as is now unfortunately before us. But I do also assert still farther, that part, and no small part, of the disadvantageous circumstances of this country, does arise from those instances of misconduct in ministers which I have stated; from their having forfeited great advantages of alliance, and having sought opportunities of disgrace; from having conceded without conciliating, and interfered without prevailing; from having adopted a system of insulated policy unwisely in the first instance, departed from it in the second instance (in regard to the affairs of Switzerland), without necessity, and without effect, and retreated to it again discomfited and dishonoured; from having by all these circumstances humbled the dignity, and lowered the tone of the country, and thereby

weakened the best and surest defence which any country can have for its honour and security, the respect of its enemies and rivals. Sir, will my honourable friend, after this recapitulation, again accuse me of having acted, or (as he seemed to state it) professed to act on a groundless, womanish, fanciful distaste and dislike of His Majesty's ministers; or will he not fairly own, that if I am founded in my premises, I am justified in the conclusion, I mean in withholding my general confidence from ministers, whom I conceive to have done so ill by the country; and who having contributed to reduce it to the situation in which it lies, do not appear to me to be the persons best calculated to exalt and to sustain it?

But a further charge against me by my honourable friend, and that which I was most anxious not to let pass without an immediate answer, is that of my having, in contrast with the demerits and defects of the present administration, brought forward the name of a right honourable gentleman now absent (Mr. Pitt), and drawn invidious distinctions and comparisons between him and his successor in the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir, my first answer to this charge is, that I have never done so. If my honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) had been present on the first night of the sessions, when he states this to have been done by me, he would know that I had

done no such thing. Neither on that night, nor at any other time, have I brought forward my right honourable friend's (Mr. Pitt's) name, nor even alluded to his existence; except when I have heard, as on the first night of the session I certainly did hear from the honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox) a direct and violent attack on the whole conduct and principles of his administration. Then, indeed, I did feel it impossible to be silent. I did feel that I should have been the most insensible and most ungrateful of mankind, if (amidst the silence of others much better capable of undertaking his defence) I had not done the little that was in my power to repel an attack at once so unqualified and so unjust. But even the reply which this attack provokes from me, my honourable friend (from misrepresentations made to him I am sure, not from intention,) has entirely misrepresented. He represents me to have averred, among other things, that the event of the battle of Copenhagen, and that of the campaign in Egypt, were certain beforehand. Sir, I hope I need hardly argue, that I could not advance such an absurdity. What I did say was this: in answer to an assertion often made, and too often suffered to go uncontradicted, that the state in which the late administration left the country, was altogether not only deplorable but hopeless; I did take the liberty to point out

some hopes, and chances, and facilities, which they bequeathed to their successors; and I mentioned particularly the armament for the Baltic, and the expedition to Egypt, not as undertakings certain of success, but as undertakings which the eventual success had justified, and with regard to which the new administration had this peculiar and remarkable advantage, that if they had both, or either of them failed, they (the new administration) would not have been responsible for the failure. The fruits of success were theirs; but not theirs the responsibility for failure. The very terms of this proposition show that I did not, and could not, state success as certain, and failure as impossible. But I did and do state it as a singular facility and good fortune, which probably never attended the outset of any former administration, that they inherited from their predecessors in office, all their chances of credit and advantage, while they stood clear of any discredit from reverse and disappointment. I did and do state this circumstance as a complete answer to all the stuff that we have heard about sacrifice in taking office on the one hand, and all the unjust aspersions about flying from difficulty and responsibility on the other. If in this respect the former ministry cannot be justified without detracting something from the exaggerated panegyrics upon their successors, that is not my fault. I did not start

the topic; but as often as it is started in my presence, I shall be ready to meet it precisely on the same ground. It is thus only, I say, Sir, in pure defence alone against charges directly brought against him, that I have ever even alluded to my right honourable friend. As to bringing forward his name in the way and with the view imputed to me by my honourable friend on the other side of the House, for the purpose of suggesting him back into office, that I confidently affirm I never have done, nor any thing like it; not because I am hypocrite enough to deny or disguise (when challenged to speak my mind) the wish which I entertain in common, as I verily believe, with the greatest part of the public; or my opinion of the absolute necessity of his being where he ought to be; of his filling again that situation which he alone is competent to fill with advantage to the country. I do not pretend to indifference in this point; but I feel and acknowledge that the very sentiments of personal attachment and affection which bind me to him make me an unfit person from whom the declaration of such an opinion should come uncalled for. My testimony could add nothing to the public sense of his merits; but the uncalled-for obtrusion of it might subject me to imputations of personal views and interest, vulgar imputations to be sure, and such as I am truly sorry my honourable friend

over the way, or my honourable friend the Attorney-General, should have allowed himself, on a former night, to adopt and sanction; but such as, though I have something within me (be it pride or conscience) that enables me to treat them with disdain, neither I nor any man in his senses would wilfully go out of his way to incur. I say this to convince my honourable friend, not only that I did not, but that I could not, consistently with these feelings, for the sincerity of which I am sure he will give me credit, originate any such suggestion as he has imputed to me.

But if I am pushed to the wall, and forced to speak my opinion, I have no disguise nor reservation; I do think that this is a time when the administration of the Government ought to be in the ablest and fittest hands; I do not think the hands in which it is now placed answer to that description; I do not pretend to conceal in what quarter I think that fitness most eminently resides; I do not subscribe to the doctrines which have been advanced, that in times like the present the fitness of individuals for their political situation is no part of the consideration to which a member of parliament may fairly turn his attention. I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of parliament can have to discharge, than by giving, at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with

the cant of " measures, not men!" the idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along! No, Sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are every thing, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, Sir, of times of difficulty and danger; of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours (laudable though they may be), but by commanding, over-awing talents; by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is? A man. You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable, before the date of Buonaparte's government; that he found in her great physical and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Buonaparte; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures, and his policy. It is his

genius, his character, that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But for the purpose of coping with Buonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all. This is my undisguised opinion. But when I state this opinion thus undisguisedly, is my right honourable friend to be implicated in a charge of prompting what I say? Sir, I wish not to speak of myself; but I must say thus much, we are both above such a suspicion. Such, however, is the charge brought against him, accompanied and aggravated by another not less disgraceful to him, of guiding at a distance, in secrecy and irresponsibility, the measures of the Government, and thus playing one part of his friends against the other. Of all the imputations to which that right honourable gentleman could be subjected, I confess I did think that of intrigue and cabal the least likely to be preferred against him by any man who has witnessed his public conduct; and least of all, perhaps, by my honourable friend opposite to me, who is a better judge of men than to believe what he says, and whose heart, I am sure, disclaims the accusation at the moment that he is making it. Is there any thing in the life of that right honourable gentleman, is there any thing in the

last years of his life, to justify such an accusation? No, Sir. Never did young ambition just struggling into public notice, and aiming at popular favour, labour with half so much earnestness to court reputation, and to conciliate adherents, as my right honourable friend has laboured, since his retreat from office, not to attract but to repel, not to increase the number of his followers, but to dissolve attachment and to transfer support. And if, whatever has been his endeavours to insulate and individualize himself in political life, he has not been able to succeed wholly even with those who would sacrifice to his wishes every thing but their attachment to him; if with the public he has succeeded not at all, what is the inference? what, but that, retreat and withdraw as much as he will, he must not hope to efface the memory of his past services from the gratitude of his country; he cannot withdraw himself from the following of a nation; he must endure the attachment of a people whom he has saved. For him, therefore, I disdain to answer such a charge as has been made against him. For myself I may be allowed to say, that, for this one plain reason, if for no other, I cannot very fairly allow him to be held answerable for the sentiments which I have uttered, because till the moment in which I uttered them, I was myself wholly unconscious of any intention to make any such declaration as I have made: it has been extorted from me. If my right

honourable friend had been sitting in his place here beside me, he would have been as unprepared to hear, as I was to pronounce it. But had he been sitting here, called upon as I have been, I would not the less have declared myself as I have done, however the fear of hurting his delicacy might have awed and constrained me. But, present or absent, he is no party to what I say. Thus much, Sir, for that part of the charge in which I am coupled with my right honourable friend.—The other, that of guiding the administration, it is not for me to answer: but it is one no less grave and serious in itself, and requires a no less distinct and peremptory refutation. And I do trust that His Majesty's ministers will feel the strongest anxiety to remove an imputation equally discreditable to him and to themselves. I am confident they will not suffer this night to pass over without disclaiming in the most unequivocal terms any secret guidance, any over-ruling influence, such as has been, groundlessly I am sure, insinuated against them and him; such as not only his, and their characters, but the constitution of the country itself, is deeply interested in their disclaiming. For, if on the part of my right honourable friend, I think myself entitled to claim that he shall not be loaded with responsibility where he has not power, I would claim no less strenuously on behalf of my country, that it should not be governed, nor held to be governed, by power,

without constitutional responsibility. Sir, this is all that I think it necessary to trouble you with upon those points in my honourable friend's speech, which occasioned my rising to address you. I shall give my vote this night in favour of large military establishments; but I need not detain you with any further statement of the reasons by which that vote is determined.

The Resolutions were agreed to.

ON VOTING AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF SEAMEN.

MARCH 11, 1803.

Mr. Garthshore moved, in a Committee of Supply, that an additional number of 10,000 men be employed for the sea-service, for eleven lunar months, to commence from the 26th February 1803—including 3,400 marines.

Mr. Canning, in supporting the resolution, said:—Sir, I am anxious to declare my readiness to vote for the present motion as a motion of necessary defence and preparation, which the Minister has thought proper to require. I vote for it because I feel that those who supported the war originally, were bound in consistency to support the means of maintaining it so long as it should be found necessary to continue it, and to provide

the means of preparation in the event of being obliged to renew it. In reply to a question as to the specific grounds on which I support the Resolution, and why I vote in favour of a measure brought forward by men of whose general system of policy I disapprove?—my answer is, that here, Sir, in the union of these two grounds stated in the King's Message—in the statement that armaments are going on in the ports of the enemy—and that there are at this moment important discussions pending between us and France, do I find the justification of this night's vote; and upon these grounds, taken together, do I cheerfully concur in it. I vote for 10,000 seamen, or any other number that Ministers may please to ask, not only to enable Government to be prepared against any sudden invasion, or any hostile aggression which may be committed by the armaments in France and Holland in any part of the world, against the rights and interests of this country; but farther to enable them to bring at length to a point, all the discussions which are at this moment pending between them and the First Consul of France. I inquire not, I have no wish to know, on what subjects those discussions turn. It is notorious enough that there are but too many possible grounds for them; that some of the articles of the treaty of Amiens are yet unexecuted, some of them perhaps unexecutable; and that there have been on the part of France acts of insult, violence, and outrage, innumerable, unexampled, intolerable,

for which Ministers are perfectly justified in demanding reparation and atonement. I ask not for any information at this moment. I express only my confident hope that Ministers have asked for this armament, and that they will employ it effectually, to bring to a final settlement all these vexatious and perplexing differences which have already, God knows, been suffered to subsist too long; that they are determined to be trifled with, mocked, and wronged no longer; that they think the country has already suffered enough by delay and irritation; that they will not lay by the means of exertion which they have now acquired, nor let them languish in their hands, until they shall have converted the present ambiguous and feverish repose, which is at once the disgrace and danger of the country, into solid and real peace. This I expect of them. I trust that they, in common with the public, are weary and ashamed of the state in which we have been kept; a state anomalous and undefinable; a state, for which the annals of history afford no precedent, and the vocabulary of politics furnishes no name; a state, not of profound peace, as it was most whimsically and unaccountably described by a right honourable gentleman below me (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) a few nights ago! but a state neither of peace nor of war; neither of secure rest, nor of honourable or hopeful exertion; peace, if peace it must be

called, without tranquillity, without economy, without safety; and subject to all the anxieties, to more than all the dangers, and to no small part of the expenses of war, without the chance of its advantages, without the consolation of its glories, and without that prospect which war, vigorously conducted, always affords, of leading to a termination in secure, settled, and permanent peace.

This state, I say, I hope Ministers are determined by every exertion to change into a definite and durable state of things, by war, if war for that purpose shall be unavoidable; and by firmness, by spirit, by a resolution to be trampled upon no longer, I believe it may be effected; and, I believe, if these means had been sooner resorted to, the effect might have been produced long ago. In this confidence, and in the confidence that, when they surrender up an account of the trust which we are now committing to them, they will show us what they have done with it, and satisfy us that they have employed it to the best advantage, I heartily concur in the present vote; but I warn them, that if they shall relax their efforts before they have accomplished all that is required of them, if they shall come down to Parliament with a history that the armament in the hostile ports has, after all, sailed to its avowed destination, and that therefore there is an end of jealousy and preparation on our part; if they shall attempt to put this fraud and trick

upon the country; if they shall no otherwise atone and account for the shock to public confidence and public quiet, which their late message has produced,—unnecessarily: if no other result than that which I am here cautioning them against should be apparent; if, in a word, instead of a complete, honourable, and durable settlement and consolidation of the peace, they shall do no more than restore the country, after this shock, to the same feverish, unwholesome repose from which they roused it; to that slumber which is disturbed by constant alarms, and perpetually recurring horrors and dangers, by which the country is not refreshed and recruited, but exhausted, harassed, and agitated, even more than by war in its worst form; if this shall be the end of all our preparations, the produce and reward of all our confidence, I shall then accuse Ministers of having disappointed the vote of this night, and abused the trust reposed in them, of having deceived Parliament, and betrayed and undone the nation. This, Sir, is the meaning of my vote. And with this explanation I heartily concur in the proposition upon your table.

One word only upon a subject which has been introduced into the debate of this night—the persons and characters of those who fill responsible situations in His Majesty's service, and their capacity to conduct the affairs of the country in a crisis of such difficulty and danger. Sir, at a moment

like the present, I, for one, cannot pause to inquire who are the Ministers of the Crown. The Crown calls upon us for instant help to avert instant danger. This is not a time to consider into what hands the management of what we grant is to be committed. We have no leisure to choose. Awful indeed is the responsibility of those who advise the call that is thus made upon us; and the time of this account must come. But for the present let us give without hesitation all that can be required by the executive government, be it in whose hands it may; trusting that the means which are thus cheerfully furnished to them will be employed in a manner suitable to the importance of the interests at stake, and such as shall deserve the unqualified support which is afforded by Parliament, and the zealous and enthusiastic unanimity which pervades all ranks of the people.

DEBATE ON THE KING'S MESSAGE RELATIVE TO THE DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE.

MAY 24th, 1803.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER on the 16th of May presented the following message from His Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of

Commons, that the discussions which he announced to them in his message of the 8th of March last, as then subsisting between His Majesty and the French Government, have been terminated; that the conduct of the French Government has obliged His Majesty to recall his Ambassador from Paris, and that the Ambassador from the French Republic has left London.

His Majesty has given directions for laying before the House of Commons, with as little delay as possible, copies of such papers as will afford the fullest information to his Parliament at this important conjuncture.

It is a consolation to His Majesty to reflect that no endeavours have been wanting on his part, to preserve to his subjects the blessings of peace; but under the circumstances which have occurred to disappoint his just expectations, His Majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and public spirit of his faithful Commons, and on the exertions of his brave and loyal subjects to support him in his determination to employ the power and resources of the nation in opposing the spirit of ambition and encroachment, which at present actuates the councils of France—in upholding the dignity of his crown, and maintaining the rights and interests of his people. G. *R.*"

On the motion of Lord Hawkesbury the Message was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 23d. A similar message was presented to the Lords by Lord Pelham.

Papers respecting the discussions with France were laid before both Houses on the 18th of May—and on the 23d,

Lord Hawkesbury moved, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return to His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious Message, and for the communication of the several papers which have been laid before it, in obedience to His Majesty's command: to assure His Majesty of the just sense we entertain of His Majesty's uniform and anxious endeavours to preserve to his people the blessings of peace, and of our perfect confidence in His Majesty's disposition to terminate the calamities of war, whenever the object can be accomplished consistently with the honour of His Majesty's Crown and the interests of his people: that we have observed with the strongest feelings of indignation that His Majesty's endeavours have been frustrated by that restless spirit of ambition and domination by which the Government of France has been led to advance pretensions the most extravagant and injurious, and to avoid designs at once inconsistent with the obligations of good faith, and with the essential interests of the British empire; and that for their indignities and provocations His Majesty has in vain demanded satisfaction and redress: that, actuated by these sentiments, we feel the trust reposed in us by a brave and loyal people, requires on our part a firm determination to co-operate with His Majesty in calling forth the resources of the United Kingdom for the vigorous support of a cause in which are involved the dignity of His Majesty's Crown, the rights and liberties of his people, and all that is dear and valuable to us as a free and independent nation!"

Mr. Grey acknowledged the necessity of resisting the

spirit of encroachment of France, yet with a view to leave an opening to accommodation, he moved an amendment to leave out from the word "command," at the end of the first paragraph, to the end of the question, in order to insert these words, "To assure His Majesty of our firm determination to co-operate with His Majesty in calling forth the united resources of the kingdom for the vigorous prosecution of the war in which we are involved; and to express to His Majesty the satisfaction with which his faithful Commons have received His Majesty's gracious declaration, that he is willing to afford, as far as may be consistent with his own honour, and the interests of his people, every facility to any just arrangement by which the blessings of peace may be restored to His Majesty's loyal subjects."

In the course of the adjourned debate on this amendment,

Mr. CANNING rose and said:—Sir, my anxiety to assign the grounds of the vote which I shall give this night in cordial support of the Address as originally moved, and against the amendment which has been proposed to it, principally arises from the attempt which has been made by the gentleman who has moved and those who have supported the amendment, to confound in one view the conduct of Ministers with the cause of the country, and to establish, that whoever voted for the original address must be considered as expressing a distinct approbation of the manner in which the negotiation has been conducted.

Had not such an amendment been proposed, or

such a construction been attempted to be given to the original Address, I should have thought it quite unnecessary to trouble the House with a single word in explanation of my vote in support of the Address; a vote which is dictated by feelings such as I am confident are shared by every man who hears me, which has been already called for and enforced on a former night, in a speech so convincing and so commanding, that he must be insensible indeed who could resist the power of such persuasion; and vain indeed must that man be who could hope to add any thing to its efficacy. I should have contented myself, therefore, with evincing by a silent vote my complete acquiescence in the reasoning of my right honourable friend beside me (Mr. Pitt): and I should have thought that vote sufficiently protected from misconstruction, by the guards and qualifications which my right honourable friend has provided for his own, if I had not heard the assertion again advanced this day by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread), that an approbation of the address necessarily carried with it a panegyric on the Ministers. From this assertion I entirely dissent: but still more solicitous am I to protest against the truth of the proposition which is the converse of it. If to support the cause of the country be necessarily to approve the conduct of Ministers, the converse seems to be, that a hearty disapprobation of the conduct of Ministers must necessarily preclude

me from supporting the cause of the country. I am most anxious not to be so precluded. I will not allow myself to be so. And, reserving therefore to a future occasion, such as must in all probability occur soon (such as, when it shall occur, I will not shrink from, the) expression of my opinion upon many parts of the conduct, not only of the last negotiation, but of the whole of our foreign system, from the peace of Amiens downwards, which is now for the first time brought under parliamentary cognizance: I shall content myself this day with stating very shortly the view which I take of the causes, the necessity, and the magnitude of the contest in which we are now embarked: and in our conviction of the justice of which contest, in our perseverance under all its difficulties, and our unanimous determination to bring it to a complete and satisfactory issue, is involved, as I firmly believe, the question of our existence as an independent nation.

In reviewing the causes of the war, as we are now called upon to consider of them, the question of this night appears to me to be simply this:—whether, under the circumstances of the present moment, the war is on our part just and necessary —necessary, unless we are prepared to abandon the plainest and most important interests of the country (an alternative which I trust no man can dream of submitting to;) and whether, such being the nature and character of the war, the House of

Commons are prepared to tell His Majesty, in the face of the enemy, and in the face of Europe, that they will support him to the utmost of their power in the vindication of the honour of his crown, and the rights and interests of his dominions? This is the single question, and upon this I cannot conceive that there can exist any difference of opinion. That the papers on the table involved and suggested many other questions—questions material and important in themselves, and fit to become the subject of grave parliamentary deliberation, I am by no means disposed to deny. Whether too much has not been borne, and too much hazarded by delay? Whether Ministers have made their stand early enough? Whether, if made earlier and in a bolder tone, the enemy might not have been checked in time, and the last extremity possibly avoided? Whether the honour of the country had not been compromised by forbearance and concession, and a notion of its humility and readiness to bear injuries and put up with insults suffered to grow up in the mind of the enemy? Whether our case has been throughout well argued, and exhibited in its fairest light? These are points upon which, undoubtedly, great difference of opinion may arise; but they are points (in my conception), capable of being completely put out of view in this night's deliberation. Will any man contend, that in a suit at law, the justice of a good cause could be vitiated by any

mismanagement of the counsel employed to conduct it; or would an upright judge or an enlightened jury, suffer that consideration to influence their decision? Still less would the person interested in the cause be likely to agree to so perverse a mode of judging, and to insist upon complicating in a single verdict or sentence the questions of, whether his cause was good, and whether his counsel had managed it to the best advantage? The question of this night is, whether our cause be good—whether, upon the point now at issue between us and France, we are in the right, as against Buonaparte?

As to the point immediately at issue, and upon which the war actually begins, I agree in the forcible statement of a learned gentleman (Mr. Dallas),* who has spoken for the first time this night, and upon the acquisition of whose abilities I congratulate the House, that it is Malta: to which the learned gentleman properly added, Malta, not for its own intrinsic value and importance only, but Malta, as the defence of Egypt against designs, not secretly cherished, but openly and impudently avowed, and the defence, through Egypt, of our Empire in the East. To this qualification of the learned gentleman, I would add, Malta, not taken by itself, as a single insulated point of discussion (important as it was, from its

* Afterwards Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

association with the great interests just described); but Malta, considered as that point upon which the honour of this country was committed, upon which the last stake of its dignity depended, being as it were that last point, upon which, after a series of violences, insults and aggressions, more or less injuriously offered, and more or less undisguisedly maintained, the First Consul at length, out of patience with all disguise, or moderation, spoke out plainly, declared his will and pleasure, and left us no other alternative than instant submission or open war. "Malta or war," was the doctrine of Buonaparte. "The refusal instantly to evacuate Malta will be considered as the commencement of hostilities," was the less pointed, but not less peremptory or less intelligible comment of the Minister Talleyrand. We do not evacuate Malta at the word of command. The other alternative is war. War, therefore, and war for Malta, was not only founded in necessity and justice, but it was just and necessary in a twofold view. It would have been just, necessary, and unavoidable, if nothing else were in contemplation than to guard those interests of which Malta is the natural outwork; and which, the report of Colonel Sebastiani, the publication of that report in the official gazette of France, and (if after such a manifestation of design any confirmation were necessary) the confirmation of the projects there developed by the direct avowal of

the First Consul himself, proved to be the objects of constant, hostile meditation with the government of France. Equally just, equally necessary, and equally unavoidable the war would have been if we were to have considered only the point of honour (and all those consequences, which, to a nation like this, are involved in the maintenance of its honour); if Malta were no otherwise important than as being that point on which a peremptory defiance had been thrown out against us, that on which France had thought fit to try our courage, and put our spirit to proof; the last remaining pledge of former glory, fortunately still in our hands, and attempted by France to be extorted from us by menace and insult; the last remaining means of effectual resistance against a general and undisguised system of aggression and violence; against a plan to degrade, to harass, to wear us out by continual agitation; against a spirit of envious, malignant, unchanged, and incurable hostility.

The indications of this malignant temper, the proofs of these hostile dispositions and designs, are to be found in every page of the papers laid upon the table.

An attempt was made indeed to contend, that however atrocious each particular instance of outrage might be, yet that having suffered each to pass without effectual remonstrance and substantial redress, at the time of its being committed, Ministers had not only precluded

themselves from recurring to them to justify their conduct, but had precluded the country itself from citing them in proof of the justice of its cause. To this mode of reasoning I cannot subscribe. That in passing over many things, which they appeared to have passed over without any remonstrance at all, that in offering in other instances, futile and unavailing representations, in accepting insufficient assurances of reparation, and in acquiescing, as had too often been the case, in silent neglect or peremptory refusal, Ministers had been guilty of highly blameable misconduct, had disgraced themselves and betrayed the country, I am as little disposed as any man to deny, and at a proper time I shall be prepared to argue. But that these neglects or omissions are fatal to the justice of our complaint, that the country can be thereby bound to acquiesce in all that has been done and suffered, nay, that Ministers themselves are precluded from recalling, in aid and aggravation of the present immediate cause of war, those prior grievances which would have been and were causes of war, so far as justice was concerned, but which they did not think such as to make war necessary and unavoidable; is a proposition which I will venture to say, cannot be maintained without leading to the inferences which those who attempted to maintain it, would probably be the last to allow. This proposition is maintained by those who were supporters and approvers of the

peace of Amiens. Now if it be admitted, as it can not but well be, and has not been denied, that among the instances of outrage and misconduct on the part of France, enumerated in His Majesty's declaration, there are many, even within a short space of time after the treaty of Amiens was concluded, nay, some even before that treaty was signed, which called for atonement; and if it be true, that every such instance ought, in all cases, to have been instantly pushed to redress, and that the refusal of redress would have been in every instance cause of war;—not only the peace of Amiens, could not have lasted an hour, but it could never have been made: unless, indeed, what surely no man will be found to avow (though there might not be wanting some perhaps who secretly felt it) the peace of Amiens was made upon the terms, and held upon the tenure, of surrendering all acknowledged and established principles of national independence, all right to repel injury or resent insult, all pretence to sympathise with the interests of our neighbours, or even to watch with jealousy over our own.

Short, however, of the principle which I confidently maintain, that the country has lost nothing of its right to redress former wrongs by any omission of Ministers to claim it at an earlier period, there is another way in which the enumeration of those wrongs bears strongly upon the

immediate cause of war, and contributes to justify Ministers themselves in the stand which they have at length thought proper to make. It is simply this. The outrages of which France has previously been guilty, even if past redress, are still historically true (that will hardly be denied); and, as such, furnish at least strong and indisputable indications of the general spirit by which France is actuated, as well towards this country, as towards all the world. War is a mixed consideration; justice ought to be its first character; but it cannot be denied that expediency ought also to enter for something into the decision. No war ought to be undertaken at all that is not just; but even a just war may be well avoided, if it be not at the same time expedient to engage in it—if it can be avoided without shame, or danger, without loss of character, or hazard of essential interest. Take the instance of Malta itself. If our dispute respecting that island had grown up between us and some other power, to whom we could attribute no general disposition to violence and unlawful aggrandisement, no particular enmity towards us, no design to turn the acquisition (should it fall into their hands) to our disadvantage; if the discussion were with Russia, with Austria, with Naples;—our cause might still be good, our refusal to evacuate Malta under the circumstances of the present time, would still be completely justifiable; but it would neither be

equally necessary, nor equally expedient to have pushed the dispute to the issue of war: because we should have had no previous certainty—no "foregone conclusion," to convince us of the spirit in which the demand was made, of the insult intended to be conveyed in it, and of the advantage to be taken of our compliance. Look then at all those instances of aggression, at all those ebullitions of an insolent and domineering spirit with which the king's declaration is crowded; Piedmont, Parma, Elba, Switzerland, Germany; the press, the emigrants, the confiscation of British commerce, the mission of French commercial commisioners, aggressions abroad, which no former age would have tolerated; insults at home, which at any former period of our history British flesh and blood could not have borne (I will abstain from saying what I think of the policy of bearing them): but look at them not as distinct causes of war (it is not in that light that the declaration presented them), but as indications of the views, the *animus* of the enemy; as helps whereby to judge of the intentions of any future demand, and of the policy of any further submission:—and then let the House judge whether, when the demand for the evacuation of Malta came in the shape in which it did come, ministers could so far mistake the meaning and spirit of it, as not to feel, that in complying with it (if they had so complied), they would

have put out of their own hands an instrument of defence, and into the hands of Buonaparte a weapon of offence and attack, of which a few short weeks would have taught him all the value; and that, instead of preserving peace by this last act of condescension and submission, they would only have invited further aggressions, and ensured the execution of the threat of war, in exact proportion as they had shown themselves unwilling to encounter it, and had thrown away their means of meeting it with advantage?

If in one view, therefore, of the question of the retention of Malta, considering it as the only remaining point upon which (after letting so many others go by, whether wisely or not I will not now argue) Ministers can make their stand; considering the demand for its immediate evacuation, accompanied with the threat of immediate war in case of refusal,—as the crown and summit of a heap of injuries and insults,—as the last of a long train of outrages, either now to be resisted, or to be submitted to patiently for ever; if in this view the choice of Ministers—perfectly defensible; if, in fact, they had no choice; I confess, that in the other view, considering Malta as the possession in the world the most applicable to guard against the specific danger which we foresee, and the specific attack with which we are threatened, I not only think Ministers right in refusing to surrender the island; I not only think Parliament

and the country bound to adopt this refusal as their own, and to support and maintain it with their most cheerful concurrence, and most strenuous exertions; but I perfectly agree in a sentiment uttered early in this debate by my right honourable friend (Mr. Grenville), that if Malta had not still, by great fortune, been in our hands; if the question had been not about refusing to surrender, but about endeavouring to recover it—not about its retention, but its conquest by force of arms,—we should have been justified in attempting that conquest and recovery; nay, we should have been untrue to ourselves if we had not attempted it with all our means. I agree in this sentiment most cordially; but I agree in it, in the sense in which it was uttered by my right honourable friend, not in that which has been put upon it by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread). That honourable gentleman has (I am persuaded from misapprehension only) represented the avowal of this opinion on the part of my right honourable friend, as an avowal of a resolution to invade the rights of unoffending and neutral nations in a quarrel between Great Britain and France, as if the argument had been of this sort, that the views of France upon Egypt would have been a sufficient reason with us for wresting Malta from the Maltese. No such thing. My right honourable friend studiously guarded himself from such a misinterpretation: and I beg

leave to do the same, by stating (not so much by argument as by an assumption which I believe nobody will venture to controvert), that the surrender of Malta on our part, at the demand of France—under any of the provisions which either the treaty of Amiens itself, in the first instance, or any of the fruitless and hopeless attempts which appear in the papers on the table, to amend and make effectual that absurd and impracticable article has yet devised,—would have been tantamount to a surrender of the island directly into the hands of France. It is as against France, therefore, that my right honourable friend stated that we should be justified; it is as against France, that I concur with my right honourable friend, in thinking that we should be not only justified, but compelled, by self-defence, to have seized the island of Malta, if it had been out of our possession, from the very moment when Buonaparte's views on Egypt became manifest to the world.

There is but one other point respecting Malta upon which I feel it necessary to say a single word. A doubt was expressed as to the real importance of that island, in the view, and for the purposes, which have been assumed by the government, and by every gentleman who has argued in support of the war: a doubt how far Malta could properly be called the key of Egypt, and of the upper part of the Mediterranean—the

rock of defence against all projects against the peace of that part of the world. To this doubt any man unlearned in military and naval science, can only oppose his own belief, founded, of course, on the authorities which he thinks most sufficient, and on the observation of what has passed within the last few years. Foremost in the list of these authorities, it must not be forgotten, is Buonaparte himself. What he appears so strenuously to covet as a line of approach to the more distant objects of his restless ambition, it is natural for those who are interested in preserving those objects, to regard as the best outwork of their defence. Nor is it to be overlooked, that in both the expeditions to Egypt, that which conquered, and that which rescued it, Malta was, as it were the first stage of their progress, and the first earnest of their success. When Buonaparte sailed to the conquest of Egypt, the first notice we had of his route, and the first omen of his future victories, was, the occupation of Malta. When that army, which reversed all his victories and reconquered all his acquisitions, went in pursuit of the glory which Buonaparte's transitory successes had prepared for them, they followed his footsteps; and it was from the rest, and refreshment, which they obtained at Malta, that they arrived in Egypt vigorous and healthful, and prepared on their first landing to achieve those wonders

which decided the fate of an enterprise, the splendid events of which even the history of this country can scarcely parallel, and the fruits of which it is as much our interest as our duty not to throw away. That the possession of Malta can be a matter of indifference towards the preservation of the security which those victories acquired for us in that quarter of the world, and under the circumstances, of the present time, is not easily to be imagined. The importance of Malta upon any general view of things may, perhaps, not be so certainly appreciated. It has lain out of the road of European warfare for many ages past. But the gigantic schemes of conquest and of empire, projected by the First Consul of France, threaten to make the shores of the Mediterranean in modern, as they were in ancient times, the scenes of the most awful and obstinate struggles, and of the most stupendous revolutions in political and military affairs. Interested as Great Britain must necessarily be in the remote, if not the immediate results of those struggles and revolutions, whenever they are attempted, the experience of the last war would surely justify a strong prejudice, at least, if not a confirmed opinion, of the importance of a port, the possession of which has enabled us, and will no doubt enable us again, to make that field of renewed conflict in the Mediterranean, whenever we are called to act upon it, a field of new

triumph and additional military glory to Great Britain.

But while I state thus strongly my persuasion of the importance of Malta, in the present time, and with a view to the events which appear to be impending, I beg not to be considered as pledging any opinion that the possession of Malta is, therefore, the sole object of the war; that war is, therefore, to be carried on, or peace (whenever peace shall be possible) to be made, solely or principally with the object of retaining Malta to Great Britain. Undoubtedly I should consider the perpetual possession of Malta as very desirable and very advantageous. Undoubtedly Malta does appear to be the best security that can be obtained against dangers immediately menacing some of the most important interests of this country. But I am not one of those, who think that the separate interests of this country are all that we ought to have in our contemplation; or that the war, now that we have been forced into it for them, ought to be conducted, or concluded with a view to them only. I am not one of those who think that this country can be soundly and lastingly secure by a narrow policy, and a selfish and insulated system. Opinions of that sort have been gaining ground, I am afraid, almost ever since the signing of the peace. They were brought forward, perhaps, in the first instance,

to reconcile the Nations to the terms of that peace; they were encouraged, or, to say the least, were not sufficiently discouraged, even in this House, because they had a tendency to direct the thoughts of the people from what was passing in the world around them, or to harden their feelings to it, by a persuasion that it was no concern of theirs.

Much stress has been laid by many gentlemen, in the course of this debate, on the advantages resulting to the country from the peace of Amiens,—from the experiment, as it is called, of that peace having been fairly tried. I am not inclined to dispute these assertions. And one advantage, I am willing to persuade myself, which will have resulted from the trial of that experiment is, that we shall all feel a conviction henceforward, that a peace of such a sort, and on such a system, is not the peace which suits this country; is not one which can assure to us the real blessings, or the substantial security, of a state of peace.

There are those who have maintained in this House, and especially in the debates which took place before Christmas, when most, or many of those outrages of France, which are now cited by his Majesty's Ministers (not as causes of war indeed, but in aid and aggravation of the principal cause), were publicly notorious, and were alluded to in debate; there were those who then maintained (and among them were some persons

for whose talents and character I am sure I have the highest respect and regard), that an insulated system of policy, a disclaimer of continental interests, a separation of ourselves from the rest of the world, was the safest and most advisable system on which a country, situated as ours, could act. Any allusions to the course of policy which had distinguished the most splendid and prosperous periods of our history, any lamentations over the rank which we once held in the world, and the influence which we formerly exercised in the affairs of Europe, were then, I well remember, received with rebuke, as incitements to an unseasonable spirit, and instigations of violence and warfare. Great pains were taken, and many arguments used, to reconcile us to a lot more humble. To be great, it was stated, was not necessarily to be happy. No, Sir, I will admit greatness and happiness are not necessarily united, either in a state or an individual. But this is not putting the question fairly. The question is, whether, when they have been long united, they can ever easily be separated, without the hazard of producing either a convulsion, which shall destroy existence, or a decay, which shall slowly undermine it? An individual may be happy without being a king. But when did abdicated royalty retire to lasting security and peaceful contentment? A nation may be prosperous without being great; but when its

greatness and prosperity have been long interwoven together, the alternative is no longer within its choice; it cannot resign the one, without risking the sacrifice of the other.

Sir, we have tried this system, and are now in a state to judge how we like the result of it. We have before us the contrast of two opposite plans of policy; after a century of busy, active, complicated connexions with the powers of Europe, of assistance to their wants, and sympathy with their concerns, which have engaged us in war, no doubt, and subjected us to disquietude and difficulty—we have had eighteen months, or thereabouts, of abstraction from continental interests and alliances, during which we have left Europe to shift for itself, determined on our part to decline all interference, to avoid all contest, and hoping to be respected—or at least (which perhaps was in truth our utmost hope) to be let alone. Compare the rank and station to which we raised ourselves by the former policy, with that to which we had been fast descending, during the prevalence of the latter. Weigh the insults which we have borne, the aggressions to which we have been exposed during the short space of eighteen months, against all the causes and provocations of war during the preceding century, and see if the former do not preponderate.

We have found then (and this is the experi-

ment which I think the peace of Amiens has most fairly proved), that a country, circumstanced as this is, cannot safely abjure a dignified policy, and abdicate its rank among nations. That, with such a country, to be lowly, is not to be sheltered; to be unpresuming, is not necessarily to be safe. In vain we brought our minds to be contented with humble security; in vain did we profess ourselves satisfied to ask no more than that in our humility we should be unmolested—

"Neque enim miser esse recuso;
Sed precor ut possim tutius esse miser."

This might be the limit of our wish; but even this modest wish has been denied us. I do not say that the sense of this disappointment, that the conviction, daily forcing itself upon our judgment and our feelings that such a system could not last, ought to have precipitated us into war; but I do say, that once engaged in war, from other more pressing causes, these considerations ought to guide us, and I trust they will, both in the conduct of the war itself, and in the conclusion of the peace which our efforts in that war can alone procure to us. I do trust, that we shall now make up our minds to recur to the ancient and established policy of the nation; and that, taught by the experiment which has been tried (perhaps unavoidably, perhaps necessarily,

I give no opinion upon that point; but if to the establishment of a conviction of our true interest, I will agree, fortunately upon the whole), we shall look to conduct and terminate this contest on larger and higher principles; shall endeavour to link ourselves anew with the system of Europe, from which events have broken us off; and to raise ourselves again to that commanding situation, to that rank and consideration in Europe, which must always furnish, at once, the best chance of not being attacked, and the best means of speedily repelling any attack that may be made upon us.

The question being put, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question, the House divided:

TELLERS.

Ayes	Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Bond.	398
Noes	Mr. Whitbread, Mr. W. Smith.	67

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

ON MR. PATTEN'S MOTION RELATIVE TO THE CONDUCT OF MINISTERS.

JUNE 3rd, 1803.

Mr. Patten submitted the five following resolutions to the consideration of the House:—

First—That it appears to this House, from the declaration issued by His Majesty on the 18th day of May last, and laid before the House by his Majesty's command, that the conduct of the French Republic, during the whole period which has elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace, is considered by His Majesty's Ministers as having been altogether inconsistent with every principle of good faith, moderation and justice; as having exhibited one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult; and as necessarily creating a thorough conviction of a system deliberately adopted by France, for the purpose of degrading, vilifying, and insulting His Majesty and his Government.

Secondly—That His Majesty's Ministers, having throughout the whole period, from the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace, to the issuing of His Majesty's declaration of the 18th day of May last, neither communicated to Parliament any knowledge of the sense which they now appear to have entertained respecting the conduct and system of France, nor any regular information of the particulars on which the same was founded, or of the steps taken by His Majesty's Government thereupon, have thereby withheld from the House the necessary materials for a ne-

cessary and due discharge of its constitutional functions; and that, by encouraging throughout the country an unfounded security and confidence in the permanence of peace, they have embarrassed and perplexed our commerce, have deceived the expectations, and unnecessarily harassed the spirit of the people, and have materially increased and aggravated the difficulties of our actual situation.

The third resolution contained an averment, that it was the duty of His Majesty's Ministers to make a timely and adequate representation against such acts, as had, in their judgment, constituted a series of aggression, violence, and insult on the part of France, and that their neglect and omission in doing so had been highly injurious to the public interests.

The fourth resolution contained an enumeration of various instances of alleged misconduct on the part of Ministers—the principal charge embodied in this resolution was, that on the 17th of October last, counter orders were dispatched by His Majesty's Government, revoking the orders before given for the surrender of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the other conquests there held by His Majesty; and that the final order, by virtue of which His Majesty's forces actually evacuated the Cape, was sent on the 16th of November. That on the said 16th of November, the hostile spirit of France, had (in the judgment of His Majesty's Ministers, as now avowed by them,) already been manifested, for more than six months, by one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, for which neither redress nor reparation had, down to that moment been

obtained; and that the offensive principle had already been distinctly advanced, of excluding His Majesty from all concern in the affairs of the continent.

The *fifth* resolution concluded—"That by all these instances of misconduct in the present ministers of His Majesty's government, they have proved themselves unworthy of the confidence reposed in them, in such an important crisis as the present.

Colonel Bastard, Mr. I. H. Browne, and Lord Kensington, opposed the resolutions, principally on the ground that it was not right at this critical moment, when all agreed in the propriety of supporting the country against the danger which threatened it, to interrupt the unanimity of the House by any vote of censure on His Majesty's government.

The resolutions were supported by the Earl Temple, Mr. T. Grenville, and Mr. W. W. Wynn, who reprobated the unconstitutional system of concealment and deceit which had been adopted towards Parliament since the opening of the session.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Addington,) vindicated the conduct of Ministers, whose desire of peace induced them to manifest no inconsiderable share of patience and forbearance. As to the charge of Ministers withholding from Parliament those communications which it had a right to expect, and that they lulled the country into a promised security of permanent peace, he would say, that Ministers had uniformly stated, they had no reliance at any time on the continuance of peace; but such as arose from a

situation of the enemy, and the consciousness of our own strength. While there remained a hope of peace, no communication was made to Parliament, because it was thought that such communication would frustrate its attainment.

Mr. Pitt said, that if upon the retrospective survey of the conduct of Ministers, evidence was afforded of the misconduct, criminality, or incapacity of Ministers, however painful the task might be, in taking such a part in the case of individuals whom he respected, he should feel himself bound to concur in an address to His Majesty for the removal of his Ministers. On the other hand, if he were one of those who considered the explanation afforded by Ministers on general points, so clear as to justify a decided negative of the propositions which had been moved—a negative which would imply approbation, he should feel himself happy in joining in a decisive negative to the motion; but to this extent of censure, or of approbation, he was not prepared to go. Besides, he was aware of the inconvenience that would result from supporting any measure which had the tendency of the present motion, unless the clearest necessity existed for it. Unprepared, therefore, as he was, for a decisive vote in the direct negative or affirmative of the propositions before the House, he moved, "that the orders of the day be now read."

Lord Hawkesbury, on the part of himself and his colleagues, declined to accept the compromise offered by the motion of his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt), between a direct censure and a total acquittal. He called upon the House for a decisive vote on the conduct of Ministers.

Mr. CANNING said :—I rise, Sir, under the impression of feelings scarcely less painful than those which have been manifested by my noble friend, (Lord Hawkesbury), to state the reasons which govern the vote that I am about to give. And in giving this vote, whether I look at my noble friend, or at my right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt), who has moved the order of the day, I feel a degree of pain and reluctance, which nothing less than a conscientious sense of duty could enable me to subdue. By this overruling sense of duty I find myself compelled to differ, for the first time in my life, from my right honourable friend. But let it not therefore be imagined, that in following a different course for myself, I presume to insinuate the smallest blame, to hint a doubt of the propriety of that which, with his view of the subject, he has chosen for himself, and for those who may come, like him, with unpledged opinions to this discussion. Far from it. I admit, on the contrary, that whoever has either not completely made up his mind to the extent of that charge against Ministers which is contained in the resolutions, or whoever, agreeing, even in opinion, as to the justice of that charge up to its full extent, is persuaded (like my right honourable friend) that greater mischief may be to be apprehended from pushing such an opinion to a parliamentary declaration, than from suffering it to pass by undecided, and to be (if pos-

sible) buried in oblivion; whatever gentleman there may be, who joins with my right honourable friend, entertaining these opinions, that man is bound, as I think, to adopt the line of conduct which he has suggested, and to avail himself of the opportunity which is afforded to him of escaping from a decision which he could not negative with truth, and which he thinks cannot be affirmed without public mischief. For myself, I have no such refuge open to me. I entertain a full conviction of the truth of every one of the charges which these resolutions contain; and have no hesitation in avowing, that I think the continuance of a blundering and incapable administration, at a crisis like the present, a more certain mischief to the country than any that can arise from a public declaration by Parliament of its opinion of their incapacity and misconduct. I therefore am perfectly prepared for a decisive vote upon this question. The papers which Ministers have laid before Parliament, exhibit, to my mind, abundant proofs that our affairs have been grossly mismanaged. The production of these papers appears to me not only to afford the natural opportunity, but to throw down a challenge to all those who have, like myself, expressed a strong presumptive opinion against the conduct of Ministers, to repeat or retract that expression, now that their conduct is fully before us. And it is, as I think, a challenge

which, so situated, we have hardly the option to decline. I consider myself bound, therefore, to comply with the demand of my noble friend, and much as I lament that one for whom I feel so much personal regard, is involved in the issue of the decision, I will at least do him the justice which he requires, by voting in the first instance against the proposition which (however justifiable on the grounds on which it is offered) would prevent that decision, which Ministers are entitled to expect on the part of those who are prepared and pledged to come to it.—[Mr. Canning then proceeded to take a rapid survey of the resolutions. The first was a mere truism, stating, in the words of the declaration itself, the sense which Ministers appear, by that declaration, to have entertained of the conduct of France. To this he apprehended no objection could be urged. The second contrasted the conduct which Ministers had thought proper to hold, and the language which they had used, and the impressions which they had studiously created throughout the country, with what now appeared to have been all along their own real opinions—a contrast and contradiction not more disgraceful to Ministers themselves, than mischievous to the country which had been duped by it. Could any man reflect without indignation on the deception and delusion so long practised upon parliament and upon the people? Could any man recal to his mind, without disgust, the canting professions of

belief in the continuance of peace and amity, and good will between this country and France, uttered in that House almost daily before Christmas, nay, even up to within ten days of the declaration of war, or, what was nearly the same thing, of the King's message—uttered at moments (as it now appeared) when the secret thoughts and internal convictions of Ministers were directly at variance with the assertions which they made? Could any man consider the consequences of this system of deceit, and not think some marked censure upon those who had dared to employ it, absolutely necessary? Should it be borne that Parliament should have been called upon to vote under false pretences; that members should have been sent down among their constituents (as had happened at the Christmas recess) to spread falsehood and error throughout the country; and that the confiding country should have been misled into incorrect and groundless views, and deluded into visionary hopes, only that it might feel more seriously the blow of disappointment? For what purpose could it be that Ministers had thought this system of deception, this trick upon the nation adviseable? Was it design? What possible good could arise from it? Are men better prepared for action when they are roused out of a sleep, and as they fancy secure slumber? Or was it in sport only that Ministers spread these gay delusions? Was it matter of amusement to them to engage the commerce of the country in

wide speculations and hazardous enterprises, that they might see how men would look when a sudden and unexpected check wrested their progress, or prevented their expected returns? Or was it sheer ignorance? Did they not know what they were about? Is it their excuse for having duped England, that they were themselves the dupes of France? Had they in their possession, had they before their eyes, and in their minds, those documents which they have now at length put into the hand of Parliament, those records of insult, injury, and aggression, sufficient, one should think, to awaken the most sluggish suspicion; and did they suspect nothing of the insecurity of their peace?

There was but this alternative, either they must have been deceived themselves or they must wilfully and wantonly, and most audaciously have imposed upon the public, in representing as solid, substantial, and durable, that peace, whose baseless fabric was at that very moment crumbling under their feet. He would not refer to the instances which had been particularly quoted, to those expressions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer so rashly hazarded, and now so ingeniously explained. He did not say, "profound peace." Did he not? The many who thought they heard him must have been wonderfully mistaken; or if he did say, "profound," (he might have said it then, it appeared) it was only because "profound" and "peace"

were so apt to come together. Happy, dignified, and satisfactory explanation! He would not dwell upon this point. He would content himself with expressing his hearty adoption of every word of a resolution, which went to mark with censure, reprobation, and contempt, a system so unworthy of the government of a country like this. The third resolution no man could compare with the papers, and with the avowals extorted from Ministers, without feeling a painful conviction of its truth. Not only did it appear, beyond contradiction, that opportunities had been lost, for checking the aggressions of France by timely representation and dignified remonstrance; not only had the grossest insults been passed by without any attempt to obtain reparation; the most flagrant violations of treaty suffered to continue without observation; but it appeared now, from the avowal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that these omissions, on the part of His Majesty's Government, had been omissions, not of negligence, but of design. They had, it seems, been remiss upon system: they had studiously suffered their wrongs to accumulate; they had diligently noted them, to be sure, as they occurred: and why?—because they thought, in their profound wisdom, the government of Buonaparte entitled to peculiar indulgence! With other governments they would have been all courage, and vigilance, all high

point of honour and quick resentment of injury. But Buonaparte was not to be bound to common rules! His green and raw usurpation was entitled to privileges and indulgences which would have been denied to hereditary monarchy, and ancient, recognized, legitimate sway! I am glad, (continued Mr. Canning,) that the right honourable gentleman has fairly avowed his system. It is exactly what I have all along suspected it to be. I say, Sir, that this is the very error, the fundamental fault, of the system upon which the conduct of our Government towards France has been regulated; and, in my conscience, I believe it is to this that we are in a great measure to attribute the struggle in which we are now involved. Our stand ought to have been made, not on the last insult, but on the first, be it what it might. Unusual indulgence to Buonaparte! He ought to have been watched, and to have known that he was watched with unusual jealousy. The first moment that he outstepped, with regard to this country, the line of respect, of decency, of honourable consideration to which we feel ourselves intitled, he should have been met with firmness, and plainly given to understand that it was not so that Great Britain was accustomed to be treated; that she would herself respect a power with whom she had made peace; but that she expected, and would demand, urge, and, if necessary, enforce, equal, reciprocal respect in

her turn. Would you then have precipitated the war? In my conscience, I believe you would have retarded, possibly have prevented it. One insult tamely borne is an invitation to a second. An injury helplessly acquiesced in, is a signal for more. Temperately and steadily opposed in his first attempt upon our interests, or upon our honour, Buonaparte would have hesitated before he tried a second experiment. As it was, he had nothing to deter him. He had every temptation to proceed. He saw plainly enough that he was considered, as the right honourable gentleman now owns he did consider him, as a privileged person; that an untitled usurper was, in the eyes of the British ministry, a favoured power —and he used his privilege accordingly. I do not wonder at him. I hardly blame him. Flesh and blood—at least a tyrant's flesh and blood—could scarcely resist the temptation of trampling upon unresisting imbecility. But for my country, I do complain, that its honour has been sacrificed, and its interests trifled with, in a vain and foolish attempt to propitiate violence by submission, and to repel aggression by tameness and indulgence. I do complain, that instead of taking the best chance of averting war altogether, by a timely notice of our determination to encounter it rather than submit to oppression or to shame, we have ensured the war, such as it now comes upon us, and have gained by our system of forbearance

no other advantage, than this whining catalogue of unredressed grievances, to which the right honourable gentleman appeals as a proof of his wisdom and moderation; but which I consider as the strongest evidence of weakness and misconduct. With regard to the fourth resolution, as it has been so unanswerably argued by my right honourable friend (Mr. Grenville), I will not enter into any additional argument; I will content myself with expressing my firm persuasion, that the present Ministers are the first statesmen who ever imagined, that the most likely way of bringing to a happy conclusion any point upon which they intended to make a stand, was to put previously out of their hands all collateral means of pressing it to advantage; that when from the beginning they were determined to take their stand upon the article of Malta, it did seem to me to be the very height of weakness, inconsistency, and improvidence, not to have turned the possession of the Cape, to the obvious advantage of which it was capable—that of making it tell upon the settlement of their other disputes, and superficially upon the settlement of that dispute respecting Malta. All the evils, whatever they were, attending the recapture of the Cape, they had already incurred. They had by this act riveted Holland in the chains of France; but having done this—having ensured all the mischief arising from their own act, that they should wantonly throw

away all the possible good, implied a degree of folly utterly irreconcilable with the character and conduct of any ministry, except that whose mistakes and mismanagements were the subject of the resolutions now before the House. This only was wanting to hasten the war, which their previous neglect of their obvious duty, and surrender of the honour of the country, had perhaps already rendered unavoidable. It was to throw away the only remaining chance of an adjustment, the only means for the preservation of peace with safety, which their former profuse concessions had left for a moment in their hands. Subscribing, therefore, to the truth of every allegation contained in the resolutions to which I have referred, I can have no hesitation in giving an hearty assent to the resolution which asserts, that by these instances of misconduct, the Ministers had proved themselves unworthy of the confidence of Parliament, and incapable of administering the affairs of the country to advantage, at a crisis of such difficulty and danger. In my conscience I fully subscribe to, and adopt the averment of this resolution also; and with the solemnity which I feel to belong to such a declaration, I do declare, that I do not think the country safe while the administration of its affairs is suffered to continue in such hands.

The question being put, that "the other orders of the day be now read," the House divided:—

Majority against it 277

So it passed in the negative, upon which Mr. Pitt and several of his friends left the House. And the previous question being put, that the said first proposed question be now put, it passed in the negative. The second resolution being put,

Mr. Fox said, he should not vote for the resolution, though it was impossible for him to approve of the conduct of Ministers. He hoped that what had occurred would be a warning to them how they kept the House in the dark to the very last moment. He could not agree to a vote of censure, because he did not know but that the successors of the present ministry might be more objectionable to him than they were.

The House divided:—

Majority against it 241

Mr. Fox and several of his friends left the House without dividing; the third and fourth resolutions were then negatived, the fifth resolution was withdrawn, and at four in the morning the House adjourned.

IRISH INSURRECTION.

March 7th, 1804.

Sir John Wrottesley moved, "That the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to inquire into the conduct of the Irish Government, relative to the insurrection of the 23d of July, and the previous conduct of the Government as far as relates to the said insurrection."

Lord Castlereagh opposed the motion. His Majesty's ministers could not consent to a general inquiry such as was required by this motion, as in their judgment no blame attached to the persons in the government of Ireland whether civil or military. It was not the duty of ministers to institute an inquiry merely for the purpose of establishing to the satisfaction of the public, that no blame was imputable to any person whatever. Besides his objection that the inquiry was unnecessary, as there was no imputation of blame against any of the persons concerned in the government of Ireland, there was another material objection in point of time to this inquiry, because the object of it was to attack Lord Hardwicke, and it surely was inconsistent with justice to institute an inquiry concerning his conduct, while his whole time was taken up in administering the affairs of Ireland. And this objection did not apply to the Lord

Lieutenant only, but to the other persons concerned in the government of Ireland, whether civil or military. He did not mean to say that these were arguments which ought to preclude an inquiry, if any satisfactory grounds had been laid for one, but when no satisfactory case had been made out, undoubtedly the inconvenience that must attend it will have great weight with the House.

The charges preferred against the Irish Government were,—that they were totally ignorant of the affairs of the country;—that they were supine in the discharge of their duty;—that they had not proper information;—and that they were incapable of distinguishing the nature of information given to them, whether it were true, or whether it were false. A specific charge was also preferred against them, that they did not truly appreciate the degree of danger with which they were threatened on the 23d of July, and that they did not take adequate means to meet it. He contended that every part of their conduct showed that they had adopted every necessary precaution: and even the transactions of the 23d of July, when they came to be fully examined in a court of justice, proved the justice of his assertion. It was but justice to Lord Hardwicke, to state that he did, before the 23d of July, seriously submit to ministers upon general grounds, whether under the contemplation of the treason existing in the country, the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act ought not to be adopted as a matter of precaution. His Majesty's Ministers did not think the adoption of such a measure necessary. This was a proof, however, that the

mind of the Lord Lieutenant was not misled as to the real state of the country; or that he had taken so unwise and superficial a view of the condition of Ireland, as to suppose that it was a country of complete loyalty, and that no precautionary measures were necessary. As to the charge of ignorance against the Government, he begged leave to contend, that it was not a subject of blame in every case, if Government was not in possession of every step and plan which the conspirators might adopt, because in some cases it was actually impossible. During the former rebellion in Ireland, the system of terror was carried to such a pitch that it was almost impossible to obtain intelligence; in the present it was equally difficult to obtain intelligence, though for a different reason, for the secret was in so few hands that there were scarcely any means of information. Information, however, was received of the intended rising on the 21st, 22d, and 23d of July, through many channels; and it did not appear that the Irish Government were deficient in the necessary intelligence of the movements of the rebels, to prevent them from taking the requisite precautions.

In considering whether proper measures of precaution had been adopted, and in coming to a decision upon that question, we must estimate the extent of the danger, to know whether the measures of precaution were sufficient. He begged, therefore, the House to consider the nature and character of the rebellion. The Government knew that application had been made to the people of the North to rise, which application was so coldly received, that the report made to

the conspirators was, that the North would not act. It was also known that the counties in the interior refused to act, and that the only support on which the rebels could rely, was from the counties of Kildare, and Wicklow, and one barony in the formerly rebellious county of Wexford. The man who attempted to carry this mad scheme of rebellion into execution, was a Mr. Emmett, a young man of an enthusiastic mind, who in consequence of the death of his father, became possessed of £3,000, and this sum he thought proper wholly to embark, in the prospect of overturning the government of his country: he did not, as he had done before on former occasions, run the risk of detection by applying for subscriptions; but proceeded on his own capital, and collected a very considerable quantity of pikes, but certainly not so many as had been stated, for instead of eight thousand, there were not above three thousand; but even if he had collected eight thousand pikes, it never could have entered into his head, that he could find eight thousand men in Dublin to use them; which certainly would not have been very easy in such a city as Dublin, and with such a garrison. Mr. Emmett was obliged to march from his depôt at the head of an army of eighty men, and before he reached the market house in Thomas-street, his army was reduced to twenty men, most of whom were general officers.

The noble lord proceeded to argue, that the garrison of Dublin, which consisted of four thousand rank and file, placed in different positions in barracks, was a force more than sufficient to resist and remove any attack that such an army

as Mr. Emmett could possibly have at his command, might make. His lordship then entered into a detail of the arrangements for the defence of the City of Dublin, made by the Commander-in-chief, with the view of showing, in fact, that the precautions used, when compared with the danger, might appear almost more than were necessary. It was the death of Lord Kilwarden and Colonel Brown, that gave a degree of importance to this transaction which did not really belong to it; for when it came to be examined in a court of justice, it appeared to be a most contemptible effort of an extravagant and wild young man, and had more discouraged rebellion, and brought the cause of rebellion into more contempt than any event that ever occurred. In conclusion, the noble lord urged, that as soon as Government had known the extent of the danger, they pursued the treason through all its ramifications; they detected the traitors, and displayed clemency wherever it could be done with safety. He hoped the statement he had made, would convince the House that the conduct of the administration in Ireland, both at the time of the insurrection and since, had been that of a wise, provident, and vigorous government; he further contended that no grounds had been laid before Parliament, to induce it to grant this inquiry, and therefore it was that he should vote against the motion.

Mr. Canning.—Before I proceed, Sir, to state shortly the grounds upon which I am compelled to give my vote in favour of the present

motion, I feel desirous of offering a few observations on the ground which my noble friend who has just spoken has taken to oppose the present motion, a ground which might be urged against every motion that ever was made or ever will be made for any inquiry whatever in this House into the conduct of any administration; a course very well calculated to screen any government, however liable to perpetual attack, and which, to a government not very strong in itself, is more especially necessary for that, for many, and some of them particular reasons. It is not, in my opinion, wise to attempt to lay down any general rule to govern all cases of motions for parliamentary inquiry. Each case of proposed inquiry in this House should be considered, not with reference to any rule that is supposed to be binding, but should be decided upon its own particular merits. It is injudicious to say that inquiries in this House are at all times improper, or at all times to be indulged; but the House will judge in each case as it appears before it, will judge when the topics are brought before it, whether the facts complained of are justly so complained of, and therefore ought to be inquired into; or whether they are assumed facts, and not to be considered—whether, in short, the accusation is justly made or wantonly made—whether the resistance to it is made with a sense of the integrity of the parties accused, and of the merit of their

case; or brought forward to prevent its vileness and rottenness from being searched, and proceeds from an unwillingness to expose it.

My noble friend,* who now resists the present inquiry, has not been sparing in his general topics, but has urged them with a plainness of colouring I hardly ever noticed before. What has my noble friend said against the inquiry now proposed? That it will take up the time, the valuable time, of Parliament. Undoubtedly it will do so. But how is the time of Parliament, valuable as it is, to be applied at all? Is it not in the exercise of the most important functions of Parliament? And what are these important functions—what but that of looking into the conduct of its government, to see whether the people are well or ill governed; to see whether those who act in the government are deserving of confidence or not? How can this be known when complaints are most seriously exhibited, and offered to be proved, without an inquiry into the truth or the falsehood of such complaints? How can there be any confidence for the future, unless there is satisfaction as to the past? I must say, that the arguments offered in opposition to the present motion come with a peculiarly ill grace from the mouth of my noble friend. Sir, I voted for the Union between this country and Ireland.

* Lord Castlereagh.

I was then an English member of Parliament; since that Union I have sat here as an Irish member, and I will now ask how it is possible for this House, the great bulk of which consists of English members, to refuse to inquire into a matter so generally interesting to the empire at large, and so particularly interesting to Ireland? Or, am I to be told that I tricked Ireland when I gave my vote for the Union, as a member of Parliament for England? That the valuable time of Parliament should now be taken up in the discussion of this subject is, in my opinion, highly proper; for had it not been for the Union, the subject would have been long ago discussed in Ireland—in that House, at the door of which some of the outrages in question were committed. The very House in which the members would have assembled, had nearly been a scene of action. They would there have most assuredly instituted an inquiry, whether they had or had not been properly defended by the executive government? But if the inquiry now proposed is to be refused on the ground that the valuable time of Parliament is not to be taken up with this matter—if this is to be the specimen of attention—this the sample of diligence—this the scale of vigilance by which the anxiety of Parliament for the welfare of Ireland is to be measured, I must repent of the vote I gave, as an English member, for the Union; and now, as an Irish

member, protest against this apathy in the House towards the interests of Ireland. Such must be my feeling and such my sentiment if this inquiry is to be refused. I must repent of what I did as an English member before the Union, and in my present capacity of an Irish member, complain that Ireland has not her fair share of your attention.

But not only is this motion supposed to be improper, on account of the valuable time of Parliament which would be taken up by it, but it is improper also, because the valuable attention of my Lord Hardwicke would be taken up by it; and it is asked how the Government of Ireland is to go on if this motion is carried, for then he will be compelled to come over to this country for his defence? And here, Sir, I must disclaim every thing personal in the present motion. The noble personage supposed to be the most interested in it, I have no knowledge of, otherwise than from the Government of which he is the chief magistrate. I have no knowledge of my Lord Hardwicke. I never saw him, nor ever heard of him but as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I beg leave to say, that I am not to be understood to intend any thing personally disrespectful to that noble Lord; I speak of him merely in his official capacity on this occasion: but still when the question is whether he has governed Ireland well or ill, I must be allowed to speak my mind freely, nor will I take the plea in bar which has

been offered to this inquiry by my noble friend—that the noble lord has no time to defend his conduct. What if he be obliged to come away from Ireland? What if he be a valuable chief magistrate? "I hope we have within the land five hundred good as he." I see no absolute necessity for his remaining in Ireland. If he has incurred the suspicion of Parliament, I see no reason why he should not be recalled and brought before this Parliament to make his defence, and another appointed in the office which he now holds. It may be urged, that this course would be indecorous towards the noble lord; but I would ask whether a similar delicacy has been observed in other instances? Has it been observed with regard to General Fox? Has it not been thought necessary to recal General Fox, even although it is admitted now that there was no objection to him? And why, if the Lord Lieutenant has incurred the suspicion of Parliament, should not he also be recalled? It is now plainly admitted, that there was no objection whatever to the conduct of that gallant officer, and yet he was recalled. I know not by what chain of necessity Lord Hardwicke is so bound to the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, that however he may be accused, he cannot come home to defend himself. As to the arguments of my noble friend in bar of inquiry, he seems to have rested them upon three different grounds:—

1st, that the Government of Ireland had ample information; 2d, that the danger of the day was not so great as it has been represented; and 3dly, (a ground which has no relation to the motion) that since the surprise into which Government was thrown upon that occasion, Government has been vigilant. Now if I were to admit the truth of this last ground of justification; if I were to admit, in its full force, the assertion, that from the moment of riot, or whatever it was proper to call it, on the 23d of July, Government has been the most vigorous, vigilant, and active that ever existed; yet no part of the accusation upon which this motion is founded would have been answered, for this motion is founded upon an allegation that they did not use proper precautions before and on the 23d of July; the motion has no reference to any thing which has happened since that period.

Now, it is complained of as a thing improper, that a better prospect has been held forth on the subject of the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland than ought to have been, or than the real state of things would warrant; and upon these topics my noble friend says that he has stated his opinion with no particular emphasis, but that what he said on that occasion was to be taken with shades and qualifications. Now, Sir, my complaint is, that these shades and qualifications, with which subsequent speeches of my noble friend abounded, were never made when the

assertion of the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland was made. But when that assertion is complained of as being refuted by facts, then my noble friend turns round and produces his shades and qualifications of what he said. This reminds me of the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last session, relative to the state of profound peace, in which that right honourable gentleman then represented Ireland. He insisted upon it that when he talked formerly of a peace, he did not mean profound peace; but that the words "profound" and "peace," were so apt to come together. Why they go together, I know not, unless, indeed, that they both begin with a P. Now, I expect that ministers will deal fairly with Parliament: I am of opinion that the words of ministers, especially when they are prospective, should be weighed well before they are delivered; for I do not understand the idea that men are to be called "nature's fools," for having believed the words of a minister; or that it should be thrown in their teeth that "none but fools could believe them." Now, the House is asked why they did not bring with them, when they believed the assertion that Ireland was likely to be tranquil and happy, these shades and qualifications to accompany their belief, so as to be prepared for what has actually happened? But these were not loose or vague assertions; they were the serious assertions of a gentleman well

qualified to make them, and for that reason likely to obtain credit for them when made, from the great advantage he is well known to possess by local knowledge, and therefore it is not matter of wonder that the House of Commons gave that assertion credit. But my noble friend has said that upon the explosion in Patrick-street, Government began to think that all was not right. Now, that explosion was on the 16th of July; the insurrection took place on the 23d. Here is a period of a week, during which nothing was done; no precaution was taken by this "wise, vigilant, and provident government," notwithstanding this abundant reason for precaution. The explosion happened on the 16th, which ought to have put ministers on their guard; nothing, however, was done until the 23d. On the 23d the insurrection takes place, and then, but not till then, Government thinks of measures of precaution. Now, I must say, that if ministers did not believe there was danger after the 16th, if they could not see it, there must be an extreme blindness; if, seeing it, they did not provide against it, there was an extreme and culpable remissness. My noble friend found this a pinching part of the case, and therefore he took the usual course of very ingenious men upon such occasions; instead of meeting the thing itself, he endeavoured to call the attention of the House off from it to another, namely, the sup-

posed misinterpretation of his opponent, for he has said the number of pikes were not eight thousand as had been erroneously stated, and so considerably exaggerated on the other side, but that they were only between three and four thousand. Now, my noble friend ought to be correct upon this subject, because he has the best means of obtaining information; and when he made his statement, and endeavoured to divert the attention of the House to that which was not the truth, or from pursuing that which was the truth, he ought to have taken care that he was accurate in his facts. And here I do not accuse my noble friend of an attempt wilfully to mislead the House; but I must say, he has some way or other failed to obtain correct information; upon this very subject, in which he has been correcting the honourable baronet in his statement, he is glaringly incorrect in his own. I hold in my hand a pamphlet, admitted, I believe, on all sides to be pretty good authority, in which the fact upon the subject of the pikes, which my noble friend says were only between three and four thousand, is stated so directly the contrary, and so entirely refutes the statement of the noble lord, that I shall beg leave to read a passage out of it. This pamphlet states, "that the rebels had on this occasion thirty-six thousand four hundred ball cartridges, scaling-ladders, pikes, rebel uniforms, &c. and colours, eight thousand copies of a procla-

mation of the provisional government," &c.; and that with regard to pikes, "the mob having been supplied from the depôt with arms, &c. there then remained the trifling number of between six and seven thousand pikes," &c. But shall I be allowed to bring forward this assertion against that of His Majesty's confidential servants? I trust I shall. And that the House may see on what authority this pamphlet rests, I will state who the author of it is. It is not a speculative or vague opinion of an individual, who had no source of information on the subject on which he treated, but a grave document of perfect authority, no less than the speech of His Majesty's Attorney-General in Ireland* on the trial of Emmett, upon the accuracy of which I apprehend ministers themselves will not affect to entertain a doubt.

It has of late become the fashion in this country to run down the Attorney-General's law; but I ask ministers, if they are ready, in like manner, to run down the Attorney-General's facts? My noble friend has stated, that there were only three or four thousand pikes belonging to the rebels discovered. The Attorney-General, in his speech addressed to the jury, the object of which was to persuade them to shed blood, says that the number of pikes, after those who had been discovered in arms had been sup-

* Mr. O'Grady, afterwards Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland.

plied, was between six and seven thousands! Now my noble friend shall take his choice. Did my noble friend make a wrong apology for the Irish government in stating the number of these pikes too low; or was this prisoner, against whom this speech was opened, and who was convicted upon the proof of it, hanged upon a falsehood? Perhaps it may be said, that the speech of the Attorney-General was an exaggerated statement of the facts; but I should think that a man in so grave an office, on so grave a subject; a man I do not, indeed, know personally, but of whom I have always heard much to his advantage as a professional man, and a man of honour, would not have exaggerated at all, for it was certainly a case in which he should say nothing but what was strictly correct, because it was a matter in which his fellow-creature was to be deprived of his existence. Now if that learned gentleman did speak the truth on that most solemn occasion, my noble friend has been deceived in the amount of the arms of the rebels, and, consequently, in the amount also of the danger to which Ireland was exposed on the 23d of July. But there are two ways of stating things in an argument, with both of which my noble friend is perfectly well acquainted, and of which he is always well aware: the one is to state and to prove by facts; the other is to state a general result of assumed facts, and to prove

nothing. My noble friend has taken the latter course, as most suitable to the case on which he was discoursing. He also claimed merit to the government for things in which they had no concern in producing. He told the House that the Bank had a strong wall, which I imagine will hardly be considered as a proof of the precaution and the vigilance of Government. And as to the Castle, although he admitted it would have been disgraceful it should have been occupied by rebels, he says, that if they had entered it in triumph, they would yet have found nothing in it. I hope ministers do not mean to invert this, and say, that if they had entered the Bank they would have found nothing there too. But, surely there is something in impression upon such an occasion as that of which I am now speaking. There is much to be considered in governing a people of high and quick feelings, and strong attachments; and, therefore, if the Bank or the Castle had fallen into the hands of the rebels, if either the Castle or the Bank had been surprised and taken, even if there had been nothing of value in either, it would have had a very bad effect on the feelings of the people of Ireland.

I shall not follow my noble friend in the papers and minutes to which he referred, but all I can say is, that the statement did not strike me as having much in it. I may be wrong, my noble friend may be right, but nobody knows which of

us is right; therefore,—what?—therefore let the house inquire; for that will be infinitely better than to depend upon assertions, unsupported by proof, in the speech of any minister, however respectable he may be as an individual. I have shewn that my noble friend has suffered himself to be misled by defective information in one striking instance, and his other assertions may proceed from the same defective source. It has been said that the assertions of those who brought forward this subject were exaggerated. It has been said, and in one instance already proved, that the statements on the other side are fallacious; therefore let the House no longer rest on exaggerated statements on the one hand, or false construction, or defective information, on the other, but let the house see the facts as they really are. It is evident from the pamphlet which I have already quoted, and which I shall beg permission to quote again, that the insurrection of the 23d of July was the consequence of a preconcerted conspiracy; it was a plan instigated by treason, by persons united together by one common bond of crimes, and insurrection was the consequence of their united efforts. But whatever might be the degree of danger on the 23d of July, it is rather a curious defence to say, that precaution had been taken since that day.

I shall not delay the House by giving the clerk the trouble of reading the motion, but I believe

it referred only to transactions previous to and on the 23d of July. But another curious defence set up by my noble friend is, that it was a very dark night on the 23d of July—a very dark night indeed! Now, if the question had not been, whether Government were prepared, but whether their preparations were well executed that night, the darkness of the night or the difficulties of wind and weather, would be an excuse as far as it would go; but although the darkness of the night prevented ministers from *seeing*, it could not have prevented them from *foreseeing*. I do not see why the darkness of the night could have made ministers blind at least a week previous to that time; and I cannot help observing further, that though the darkness was so great that it was impossible to know what passed that night, yet my noble friend has stated that the number of rebels in the street that night was eighty. But how did you count them? How that fact could be ascertained when it was too dark to see any thing, is beyond my comprehension! The effect of this darkness was most singular. It made men blind before it happened, and enabled them to see during its continuance. But, in point of fact, I would ask, whether the insurrection was so contemptible as has been stated, and made only by a contemptible mob in Dublin? I apprehend not: for upon the authority of a character high in office, and in the confidence of the Irish

government (Lord Redesdale),* it has been stated, that persons had assembled from all parts of Ireland on the occasion, and it has been made the ground of a charge against three-fourths of the population of Ireland, that they had chosen and furnished their quota of these rebels; that is, that three-fourths of the people of Ireland furnished their quota of eighty men, since that was the whole number, according to the statement of my noble friend. All the Catholics are, by this same high authority, implicated in the rebellion, and have their share of the guilt imputed to them. I allude to the documents which I have read with shame and indignation, and when I heard my noble friend talk of the temper and moderation of the Irish government, I did expect that it would have been shewn that their conduct had been such as to remove every distinction, to prevent the recurrence of those differences that have so long disturbed the peace and tranquillity of that country. If that has been the policy, as I am sure it was the duty of Government, ill, indeed, has that end been endeavoured to be accomplished! Good God! Sir, that in the nineteenth century, there should be found a man of great talents, fitted for great good in a state; of great learning too, but that which he has lately displayed, that this learned person should fill the office of a great

* Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

legislator, and the highest as a legal magistrate, and that he should be appointed to preside in the only country where such antiquated doctrine could do effectual mischief! I do not say it is a fault, but it certainly is a great misfortune that such a person, with such sentiments, should be placed in such a station. I cannot augur favourably of the disposition of a government, in which such sentiments prevail; nor do I think it likely that Ireland can ever be tranquillized, as long as they shall be acted upon. I cannot think it likely that those pictures of quietness, contentment, and happiness, which have been so gratuitously afforded to the House, and so diligently laid before it—that the Rebellion was at an end for ever; that the principle on which it was fomented was destroyed; that Ireland was, by the rooting out of prejudices, become one body of harmony united in temper and in object, will ever be realized, if the policy is to be that to which I have just alluded. I am willing to give Government credit for their intention to do away all animosity in Ireland. I do not mean to say that the correspondence to which I allude is to be considered, nor do I state it as a fire-brand which threatens the country with destruction; but I do state, that great officer, as enjoying the full confidence and a great portion of the power of government, and whether he was the intended vehicle of publishing such sentiments I do not know, yet it has all the

effect of design, and I cannot help looking upon the publication of such sentiments as conveying to the public the *animus* of Government. Whether these sentiments are really the sentiments of the Government, or no, I will not pretend to say, but the great character to whom I have alluded is a member of the Irish Government; and the Government in which such a mind predominates—that is to say, a mind governed by such principles as have been published by that great person who had great influence—where such a spirit presides, and where such a spirit rules, and such opinions are cherished, the Government, influenced by it, I am sure, cannot be conciliating, nor agreeable, nor can it hold forth any prospect of comfort, to say nothing of happiness, to the Irish people. A government which permits itself to cherish such sentiments, discovers an *animus* that affords no comfort to those who are governed; it is an imprudent Government, and very ill adapted for the safety or the happiness or prosperity of the country. As to the vigilance of the Irish Government now, when they have been roused by two explosions, that appears to me as no reason why the present inquiry should not be gone into.

With respect to the manner in which the affairs of Ireland were neglected previous to and on the 23d of July, I contend, that the negligence of Government was so great, as not to keep on their

stations the most important officers of state. Mr. Wickham, a gentleman who from his station and talent might have rendered essential service to Ireland, at the time of the Insurrection, had not been desired to remain on his post, but was on an excursion of pleasure, and actually in Yorkshire when the first intelligence reached him of the Insurrection in Ireland; but, however, no blame attaches to this gentleman upon this occasion: it only makes the accusation the more weighty on those who ought to bear it. No consideration of the weight of personal responsibility on any body ought to induce the House to neglect its duty, which I apprehend it will do, if it declines entering into the present inquiry. I see no inconvenience likely to arise from this investigation that can be put into the scale and weighed against the public benefit likely to result from it. I have the greatest esteem for my noble friend, and the highest opinion of his talents and abilities; but I am so entirely dissatisfied with his arguments upon this occasion, that I shall most certainly vote for the present motion.

The motion was supported by Earl Temple, Mr. Fox, Lord De Blaquiere, General Tarleton, Mr. Wyndham, Doctor Laurence, Mr. Grey, Mr. Calcraft, Mr. Dent, and Colonel Hutchinson; it was opposed by Mr. Archdall, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Secretary Yorke, Mr. Dallas, the

Attorney General, and Mr. Tierney. Sir John Wrottesley replied, after which the question was put: and on a division the numbers were—

For the motion	82
Against it	178
Majority	96

Adjourned at half-past four on Thursday morning.

IMPEACHMENT OF LORD MELVILLE.

Mr. Canning was appointed on May 26, 1804, to succeed Mr. Tierney in the office of Treasurer of the Navy. About the same time the following changes in administration took place:—

First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer	Mr. Pitt.
Secretary of State for the Foreign Department	Lord Harrowby.
Secretary of State for the Home Department	Lord Hawkesbury.
Secretary of State for the War Department	Earl Camden.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Lord Melville.

Lord Barham succeeded Lord Melville in the office of First Lord of the Admiralty in 1805.

APRIL 8th, 1805.

Mr. Whitbread this day made his promised motion, founded on the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry. He concluded a speech of considerable length and ability (the substance of which is embodied in the resolutions), by moving the following resolutions:—

1. That it appears to this committee, that on the 18th of June, 1782, the House of Commons in a committee of the whole House, came, amongst others, to the following resolutions:—"That it is the opinion of this committee, that "some regulations ought to be adopted for the purpose of "lessening and keeping down the balances of public money "which appear to have usually been in the hands of the "Treasurer of the Navy, and it would be beneficial to "the public, if the first and other clerks in the different "branches belonging to the said office were paid by fixed "and permanent salaries, in lieu of all fees, gratuities, and "other perquisites whatsoever. That it is the opinion of "this committee, that from henceforward the Paymaster "General of His Majesty's Land Forces, and the Treasurer "of the Navy, for the time being, shall not apply any "sum or sums of money intrusted to them, or either of "them, to any purpose of advantage or interest to themselves, either directly or indirectly. That it appears to "this committee, that the commissioners appointed to examine, take, and state the public accounts of the kingdom, "have, so far as appears from the reports which they "have hitherto made, discharged the duty intrusted to

" them with great diligence, accuracy, and ability; and if " Parliament shall carry into execution those plans of " reform and regulation which are suggested by the matter " contained in the reports of the said commissioners, it " cannot but be attended with the most beneficial conse- " quences to the future welfare and prosperity of this " kingdom."

2. That in furtherance of the intention of the House of Commons expressed in such resolutions, His Majesty, by his warrant, dated June 26, 1782, directed that the salary of the Treasurer of the Navy should be increased to the sum of £4000 per annum, in full satisfaction of all wages and fees, and other profits and emoluments theretofore enjoyed by former treasurers.

3. That it appears to this committee, that during the treasurership of the Right Honourable Isaac Barré, the conditions of the aforesaid warrant were strictly complied with; that the whole of the money issued from the Exchequer to Mr. Barré for naval services was lodged in the Bank; that it was never drawn from thence previously to its being advanced to the sub-accountants to be applied to the public service; that during the time Mr. Barré acted as treasurer and ex-treasurer, he had not in his possession or custody any of the public money; and that neither he nor the Paymaster of the Navy did derive any profit or advantage from the use or employment thereof.

4. That the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, now Lord Viscount Melville, succeeded to the office of Treasurer of the Navy on the 19th of August, 1782, when a further

addition was made to the salary of the said office, in order to produce a net annual income of £4000, after the payment of all taxes and charges on the same; and that this additional salary was considered by the said Lord Viscount Melville as granted to him in lieu of all wages, fees, profits, and other emoluments enjoyed by former treasurers.

5. That the said Lord Viscount Melville continued in the said office till the 10th of April, 1783; that being asked whether he derived any advantage from the use of the public money during that period, he, in his examination before the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, declined answering any question on that head; but that he has, in a letter since written to the said commissioners, and dated the 28th of March last, declared, that previous to 1786, "he did not derive any advantage from the use or employ-"ment of any money issued for carrying on the service of "the navy." But Mr. Douglas, who was paymaster, being dead, and his lordship having refused to answer any question on this head, as aforesaid, no evidence has been obtained as to the application of monies issued for the service of the navy, or the mode of drawing the same from the Bank during this period.

6. That the Honourable C. Townshend, now Lord Bayning, held the office of Treasurer of the Navy from the 11th of April, 1783, to the 4th of January, 1784; and that from the examination of his lordship it appears that, during his treasurership, no part of the money issued for the service of the navy was applied to his private use or

advantage; and that he does not believe that Mr. Douglas, who acted under him as paymaster, derived any profit or advantage from the use or employment of the public money, except the money issued for the payment of exchequer fees.

7. That the Right Honourable Henry Dundas was re-appointed Treasurer of the Navy on the 5th of January, 1784, and continued in the said office until the 1st of June, 1800.

8. That in the year 1785, an Act of Parliament was passed (25 Geo. III. cap. 31), intituled "An Act for "better regulating the office of Treasurer of His Majesty's "Navy;" whereby it is directed that no money shall be issued from the Treasury to the treasurers of the navy, but that all monies issued for naval services shall be paid to the Bank on account of naval services, and placed to the account of the Treasurer of the Navy, and shall not be paid out of the Bank unless for naval services, and in pursuance of drafts signed by the treasurer or some person or persons authorized by him, which drafts shall specify the heads of service to which such sums are to be applied, and that the regulations under the said Act shall take place from the 31st of July, 1785.

9. That the execution of the said Act was postponed till the month of January, 1786, and from that time till the month of June, 1800, when Lord Melville left the office of treasurer, contrary to the practice established in the treasurership of the Right Honourable Isaac Barré, and contrary to the resolutions of the House of Commons of the

18th of June, 1782; and in defiance of the provisions of the above-mentioned Act of the 25th Geo. III. c. 31, large sums of money were, under pretence of naval services, and by a scandalous evasion of the Act, at various times drawn from the Bank and invested in exchequer and navy bills, lent upon the security of stock, employed in discounting private bills, in purchasing Bank and East India stock, and used in various ways for the purposes of private emolument.

10. That Alexander Trotter, Esq. Paymaster of the Navy, was the person by whom, or in whose name, the public money was thus employed; and that in so doing he acted with the knowledge and consent of Lord Viscount Melville, to whom he was at the same time private agent, and for whose use or benefit he occasionally laid out from 10 to £20,000, without considering whether he was previously in advance to his lordship, and whether such advances were made from his public or private balances.

11. That the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melville having been privy to and connived at the withdrawing from the Bank of England, for purposes of private interest or emolument, sums issued to him as Treasurer of the Navy, and placed to his account in the Bank, according to the provisions of the 25th Geo. III. c. 31, has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty.

12. It further appears that subsequent to the appointment of Lord Melville as Treasurer of the Navy in 1784, and during the time he held that office, large sums of money, issued for the service of the navy, were applied to other

services; and that the said Lord Melville, in a letter written in answer to a precept issued by the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, requiring an account of money received by him, or any person on his account, or by his order, from the Paymaster of the Navy; and also of the time when, and the persons by whom, the same were returned to the Bank or paymaster, has declared, that he has no materials by which he could make up such an account; and that, if he had materials, he could not do it without disclosing delicate and confidential transactions of Government, which his duty to the public must have restrained him from revealing.

13. That Lord Melville, in applying monies issued for the service of the navy to other services, stated to have been of so delicate and confidential a nature, that in his opinion, no account can or ought to be given of them, has acted in a manner inconsistent with his duty, and incompatible with those securities which the legislature has provided for the proper application of the public money.

After the honourable gentleman had read these resolutions, he added that he did not mean to press beyond the eleventh resolution, leaving the circumstances as to the application of the money to some other services, to some future investigation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Pitt) on the first resolution being put, moved an amendment "That the tenth report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry be referred to a select committee of this House, to examine the matter thereof, and report the same to the House."

The resolution was supported by Lord Henry Petty,

Mr. Tierney, and Mr. Ponsonby. The amendment was opposed by the Attorney General, and the Master of the Rolls.

At the suggestion of Mr. Fox, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Pitt), consented to substitute the moving of the previous question for the amendment he had proposed, in order that the original motion might appear on the journals of the House, whereas, if the amendment were carried, the original motion would not appear on the journals of the House. He (Mr. Pitt) consented to move the previous question, with this understanding, however, that should that be carried, he should then move for the Committee he had mentioned.

Mr. Canning* (who had recently been appointed Treasurer of the Navy) said, that considering the present question related peculiarly to that department of administration with which he was most intimately connected, he felt anxious to deliver his sentiments upon this occasion. He hoped that the House in its usual love of justice would give an opportunity to inquire whether the whole of the charge now exhibited against the noble lord might not be done away. And if so, they could not vote for the motion of the honourable gentleman. But what was the alternative? That the House should come to a final determination on the subject, by which all possibility of explanation would be excluded. Now, upon that subject, he could not help saying, that the mode proposed by his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) was the true way to answer the purposes

* This mark is to indicate that the speeches to which it is prefixed have not undergone Mr. Canning's revision.

of justice, by instituting an inquiry into all the circumstances of the case on both sides, which hitherto had not been done.

But the right honourable gentleman who spoke last had stated to the House, that the mode proposed by the original motion was recommended by a late precedent in the proceedings of the House on the subject of the Middlesex Election; in that case the House had decided that it would not proceed in the examination of evidence at the bar, but took up the case on the report of a committee, and adopted its statement upon the ground that the evidence which was adduced before the committee was upon oath, and that which was to be heard at the bar must be without oath; that the case was the same here, for that the evidence before the Committee of Naval Inquiry was upon oath, but if the House heard any further evidence upon that subject, they must take it without that sanction. Now, begging pardon of that right honourable gentleman, the two cases had no common nature, or indeed any resemblance to each other. The decision on the late case of the Middlesex Election, in which the House had adopted the report of the committee, and concluded upon it without hearing further evidence, did not turn on the point of difference between evidence upon oath and that which was taken without that sanction; but upon the principle that the parties charged with misconduct had been fully heard, had been allowed all the forms, and what was much better than all forms, the substance of a fair trial; they were called upon to answer; they knew the charge, had heard all the evidence in support

of it, had actually cross-examined that evidence, and were heard by counsel as to the effect of that evidence; and it appeared, upon full investigation of the case, that the party had nothing to say in answer to the charge: they were found guilty, because their guilt was fully substantiated, after they had been fully heard. But the present was the reverse of that case, for here the party had not been heard, and all that was now asked was a full hearing.

And here he would put it to the House, and, indeed, to the gentlemen opposite to him, whether it was fair to call on the House to convict the party without a hearing, which had not yet been had? And what would bring the point more distinctly before the minds of those whom he had now the honour of addressing was this, that no part of the case now before the House on this report, was matter originally intended by the course of examination taken by the committee, but it came out incidentally: and it was no part of the object of the committee to try the noble lord who was the object of the present motion for any thing; and therefore it was, from the nature of things, absolutely impossible that he should have had a fair trial, since he had indeed hitherto had no trial.

But the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Tierney) who spoke last, had observed, that in former times a committee, on the model of which this was formed, had made many wise regulations, and that the Act which was now the subject of the consideration of the House of Commons, passed without further investigation than that of a perusal of the report of the committee on which it was founded. This

might be, but he believed the right honourable gentleman could not show him any regulation of Parliament by which any individual had been condemned, without having had an opportunity of defending himself. And here the case was most singularly hard, for it was the case of an individual knowing, for the first time, from the report, now said to be conclusive, what was the nature of the charge which was exhibited against him. He was speaking now of Lord Melville, for he understood that noble lord was the only person against whom gentlemen on the other side of the House were pressing. From these complicated accounts, thus brought, without notice to his lordship, before the committee, the guilt of that noble lord was to be inferred, and he was said to have had a fair trial! and the House was called upon to confirm that assertion, without its having at all investigated the case! This application to the House was repugnant to the principles of justice. But then the right honourable gentleman stated, that an Act of Parliament had in this case been violated by the application of public money to other uses than those specified by the Act. Now he ventured to say, the violation of the Act of Parliament was a point by no means so clear as some gentlemen affected to state it; but on the contrary he believed that doubts might be very reasonably entertained upon that subject. Here he wished to guard against being misunderstood. When he said, that the Act was not so clear upon this point as it seemed to be conceived by some gentlemen, he was not thereby to be regarded as the champion of illegal defiance to the rules of law, or an imitator of such a

practice. He knew that laws, even if unwise, must be obeyed, while they were in full force. But the question was, whether the party here said to be guilty of a breach of the law, knew that he was really causing to be applied the public money to the private use of individuals? Now, considering the law as attentively as he was able, he denied that either the letter, or the spirit of it, prohibited the drawing of money out of the Bank in the manner contended for by gentlemen on the other side of the House. He was confident that the spirit of the Act could not be so, because it could never have been the intention of any law to throw insurmountable obstacles in the way of public business; and he contended that the strict letter of the Act could not be so construed; for, in many cases, a compliance with an Act, so construed, would be physically impossible. In the course of twenty-six days the amount of the sums to be paid to claimants on the navy was £6,400; £3,500 of which was made up of sums under £20. A great multitude of the items were from 8s. 6d. to £1. 8s. He wished gentlemen to turn this in their minds—whether all these sums could be paid by drafts immediately given to the claimants to receive the money at the Bank? And, if this were so, he wished gentlemen, who maintained the affirmative of that proposition, to show him the clause in the Act by which it was supported; and when they had done so, they would have proved that every person who held the office of Paymaster of the Navy since the passing of the Act had been guilty of an infraction of it.

After all, if the law was so, the breach of it was of

course not to be justified; but then came the question of the degree or impropriety of the conduct of the individual, and much of that depended upon the question of—whether he did it knowingly and unnecessarily? To pursue the idea of convenience in transacting public business of this kind a little further, he would observe, there were now 6,800 ships' books for payment, and in the course of the last three weeks payment had been made upon forty ships' books, and they abounded with items of 14s., 12s., and 15s. 9d. Now he would ask, whether it was to be contended by any gentleman in that House, with any regard to practicability in the dispatch of business, that every one of these items should be paid by a distinct specific draft upon the Bank, given to the claimant? If not, then there was an end of the argument upon the dry point of the illegality of drawing money out of the Bank for any but a specified purpose for the use of the navy! Thus the argument upon the illegality of the practice fell to the ground.

Then the question of strictness of law being at an end, the rest was a question of degree, or extent to which the practice had been carried, and that, like every other, must be governed by that which was reasonable; for he did not say that it might with impunity be carried to a blameable extent, or be endlessly followed up. It would be always just to mark it with censure whenever it was done unnecessarily; but he said it was not a question of mere law, as gentlemen on the other side of the House took it, but a question of degree. That was to be determined upon the circumstances, and the House should judge, or rather a com-

mittee should judge, how far it was necessary or unnecessary, and this the House possessed the power of deciding after a proper inquiry had been had into all the circumstances of the case, but no such proceeding had hitherto taken place.

The diversion of the public money, which was another topic brought forward, was very fit for inquiry. As to the charge, or rather an imputation, founded upon an inference, against the noble lord, that he had some participation of the benefit arising from the use of the public money while employed for the advantage of private individuals, that was a subject fit for inquiry, but to decide which, the House, at present, had no materials; and upon the question of the extent to which the public money had been drawn out from the Bank; and here he must advert to a part of the report of the committee of 1782, which had escaped the notice of the honourable gentleman who brought forward the motion, which was to the following effect: "We consider that this excess is not money for which the treasurer is accountable to the public, but belonging to the proprietors of these bills, and remaining in his hands at their risk, until they apply to him for payment." Now, he said, if this doctrine were correct, the whole money in the hands of the treasurer was not that for which he was responsible to the public, but to the individual to whom these sums belonged; and if they had received their money upon application, there had been no breach of the Act of Parliament, and the House would find, upon inquiry, that what he had stated hypothetically was the fact.

Now he would put it to the conscience of the honourable gentleman who brought forward this motion, and to use language already uttered in the course of this debate, to lay his hand upon his heart, and ask himself, whether he could believe that out of the monies which had been drawn out of the Bank, the noble lord had really any participation in the profits of using for private purposes? And whether he believed that a vote, carried to the extent of that now proposed, in deference, as that honourable gentleman might think, to the public opinion, would not be to confirm such opinion to its full extent? He would ask whether that was fair? Whether the carrying the motion now before the House, would not be to impress upon the mind of the public, an idea that Lord Melville had been found guilty by the House of Commons of foul and corrupt malversation? If gentlemen really thought so, they were right in pressing the motion; but he was at a loss to find out upon what foundation such a conclusion could be drawn from the premises before the House; for the case could not, even on the face of the report, before the other side was heard, amount to any thing more than a case of suspicion. He would then ask the honourable gentleman what he would think of the hardship of that case, if hereafter it should appear, as he believed it would, that the suspicion was without foundation?

There was another detached point, upon which great stress was laid, and which seemed to be considered a material feature in the case. He meant the circumstance of Mr. Trotter having drawn one million in one day from the

Bank, and lodged it in the house of Messrs. Coutts. His right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) had said, that much doubt lay upon this transaction, and that it might admit of explanation. Now he should go farther. He would undertake to explain it satisfactorily. The fact then was, that this million was not the whole sum drawn that day. He begged the House not to be startled when he stated how the case was. The fact was, it was part of a sum of two and a half millions drawn upon the same day, viz. the 10th of April. Of this due intimation was given in the Gazette by the Commissioners of the Navy and Victualling Office, stating, that the Treasurer of the Navy had that day received money for the services of these departments for six months, and giving the creditors an option of money or bills, as they should think proper. The next day, the 11th, these two and a half millions were offered to the persons having any demands against these several departments, and therefore there was nothing secret or clandestine in the transaction.

The next detached charge particularly concerned himself. It had been insinuated out of doors, in consequence of something contained in the report, that he, as Treasurer of the Navy, had thrown obstructions in the way of inquiry. The facts connected with that charge were these three. He had been called upon by the commissioners to furnish four several lists; but, on consideration, he found he could not furnish more than three, and even these not in the precise form required. These three, however, he did furnish, in the most complete form in his power, from the

documents which his office afforded; and for any further information upon the subject, he referred the commissioners to the books of his department. The report, however, in noticing this transaction, and his first answer, goes on to say, "his accounts were afterwards made out," implying, as he conceived, that they were at first refused. Having said thus much, however, he hoped he should not be suspected of having thrown any impediment in the way of the commissioners, to whose object, fairly and liberally pursued, no man was a greater friend than himself. He added that he wished to stand well in the opinion of the House and of the public. He concluded by observing, that if he thought this motion well founded, that a case was made out against the noble lord, he should not lift up his voice against such a motion: but he thought he did not ask too much, when he asked the House not to suffer itself by prejudice within, or by intimidation from clamour without, to take upon itself to decide without full and competent information upon the question now before them.

The House divided:—

Ayes 216
Noes 216

The numbers being thus equal, the Speaker gave his casting vote against Mr. Pitt's amendment. The original motion was then put, and the rest of the resolutions agreed to.

IMPEACHMENT OF LORD MELVILLE.

JUNE 11th, 1805.

Previously to the moving the order of the day on Mr. Whitbread's motion for the Impeachment of the Right Honourable Lord Melville, it was moved by Mr. Robert Dundas (son of Lord Melville) that his lordship be admitted into the House to be heard in his own defence, according to his request. The motion was unanimously agreed to.

The Speaker ordered the Sergeant at Arms to attend with the mace at the door, and to inform Lord Melville that he might come in. His lordship, who was in waiting, immediately entered, and advanced within the bar. He reposed for a short time on a chair placed there for his accommodation, and then in an able and eloquent speech, addressed the House in vindication of his conduct, and in refutation of the charges preferred against him in the resolutions which were passed in the House of Commons on the 8th of April. His lordship, on the conclusion of his address, withdrew.

Mr. Whitbread declined to move the articles of impeachment now, but should content himself at present with moving "that Henry Lord Viscount Melville be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors."

Mr. Bond moved an amendment, "that his Majesty's Attorney-General be directed to prosecute Henry Lord

Viscount Melville, for the several offences which appear from the report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry and that of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, to have been committed by the said Henry Lord Viscount Melville; and that the Attorney-General be directed to stay proceedings in the civil suit, instituted by order of the House against the said Henry Lord Viscount Melville." The debate on this motion and amendment continued until half past three o'clock in the morning, at which hour the House adjourned. In the course of the debate, which was resumed in the afternoon of the same day—

Mr. Canning rose and spoke as follows:—The honourable gentleman who had just sat down, seems to consider that he has found out an easy solution to all the difficulties and embarrassments that other gentlemen have conceived this question is involved in. He has undertaken to shew that there is nothing contrary to the established usage and custom of Parliament in the proposition which has been made to you, and to prove this he has cited two instances, which he seems to consider perfectly applicable and similar to the present case, but which I conceive to be widely different from it in the most material circumstances. The first instance which he mentions, is the case of Lord Halifax, in the year 1702, when it appears from the journals of Parliament, that the House of Commons presented to

the throne the resolutions which they had entered into with respect to that nobleman, and that Queen Anne accordingly directed her attorney-general to prosecute; but the great difference between that case and the present is this, that the House of Commons at that time announced to Her Majesty at once, the grounds of their resolutions, and the object of them, and the prosecution was therefore immediately ordered. In the second instance, when the House of Commons voted resolutions expressive of their displeasure of certain parts of the conduct of the great Duke of Marlborough, the crown of itself ordered a prosecution, as conceiving the communication of the displeasure of the House did at that time imply a recommendation to the crown to commence a prosecution. But how did either of those cases resemble the present, in any point that was material to the present discussion? In Lord Melville's case, the Commons had neither stated to the crown their wish that a criminal prosecution should be instituted, nor could the resolutions they had entered into, be supposed to convey that idea. They could not be so understood, when they were presented at the foot of the throne; they were not so understood when they were voted by the House. In the case before cited, the meaning and the wish of the Commons were distinctly stated, and the natural consequences followed; but in the present instance, the resolutions which were first entered

into by the House of Commons, did not express or convey any ulterior object, they could not be understood to convey that which had not even been stated by those who proposed them. In this respect it appears to me that there is a wide difference between the present case, and those with which the honourable gentleman has thought proper to compare it. There are some observations which have been made by another honourable gentleman (Mr. Grey), to which I think it necessary to reply. He seems to consider it a most unusual, if not unparliamentary thing, for the noble lord who spoke yesterday (Lord Melville), and for the noble lord who has this day spoken (Lord Castlereagh), to comment rather freely upon these resolutions of the House, and to appear not perfectly satisfied with them. I am not a very old member of this House, but I have sat long enough in it to know that it is not at all unusual in other cases to refer to the conduct of Parliament both in former times and in the present, and to express fully the opinion that any member may entertain of the votes and proceedings of the House when that opinion is necessarily connected with the question under discussion. If this is a practice in all common cases, why should it not be permitted in cases where the legislature have acted in a judicial capacity? Why should not we be as much at liberty to speak with freedom of these resolutions as of other votes and proceedings of the House, espe-

cially when every one must acknowledge that they were brought forward after a hot debate, and adopted with more precipitancy than is usual in parliamentary proceedings. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Grey), has said, not only that the noble lord who sits near me (Lord Castlereagh), but that Lord Melville has complained of the resolutions of the House. When Lord Melville was permitted to address this House, I cannot see why he should not have liberty of complaining, if he thought proper, of those resolutions from which he has suffered so severely. But the fact is, that Lord Melville did not make any complaints as to the justice of your resolutions, he did not make any additional confessions which he had before refused to make; but he confined himself to explaining several circumstances, which without his explanation, might have been completely misunderstood by the House, and in which he conceived he had been misunderstood. He contended that he had been misunderstood, if it was ever supposed that he had meant to admit that he knowingly permitted Mr. Trotter to draw the public money from the Bank for his own gain, or that he had at all authorized those speculations, which had been made in discounting bills and buying stock. If the House had been mistaken in their construction of his evidence, why should he not be at liberty to explain it, and to shew that they were mistaken in the conclusions they had drawn? If the House supposed

that Lord Melville had permitted or consented to the drawing money out of the Bank, for the private emolument of Mr. Trotter, or any other, at least that supposition could not rest on any admission of Lord Melville, and could hardly be deduced from the tenth report; for by referring to the evidence of Lord Melville, in page 142 of the report, it would be seen that what Lord Melville admitted he had authorised Mr. Trotter to draw for, was merely so much public money as was necessary for the payment of the assignments from the different offices, and for the small payments. The sense that those words would convey to any impartial and unprejudiced mind, would certainly not be so construed as to be conceived an admission of an authority to Mr. Trotter, to draw other money than what is so mentioned, and for other purposes, not for the objects expressly stated, but for his own private emolument. If from other circumstances you can infer, that a greater degree of guilt attaches to Lord Melville, that may be a different question; but certainly it should be distinctly understood that there is nothing in Lord Melville's admission, from which it can be presumed that he either authorized or knew of any improper use being made by Mr. Trotter, of the money drawn from the Bank; or that he ever imagined that Mr. Trotter could have derived any other advantage, except that small premium which, in some parts of the country, is given, on

the deposit of large sums at a private banker's. From the evidence of Lord Melville, it appears highly doubtful whether he could have conceived that he was at all violating either the letter or the spirit of the law. It appears highly doubtful whether, in fact, he did violate the law. It is my decided opinion, that if no other money was drawn from the Bank, than what was necessary for the payment of the assignments, and for the smaller payments, there was no violation of the law. Upon this point many gentlemen, both in this House and out of it, are completely mistaken in their opinion, when they consider the question as merely drawing money from the Bank of England, and putting it into a private bank. If the money was legally drawn out of the Bank, the question is not between the Bank of England and Messrs. Coutts; it is not that the house of Messrs. Coutts has been substituted for the Bank; but it has been substituted for the iron chest in the office, where the money might have been kept in a manner more agreeable to official form, but not with more security. The question of security is not between the Bank and Messrs. Coutts, but it is between the iron chest at the office (which is in some degree exposed to the various persons about the office), and the private banker; and, in this view of the subject, I do not hesitate to say, that I think the security of the private banker is greater than that of the iron chest. If there would have been no

violation of the law in leaving the money so drawn out in the iron chest, I will contend that it is no violation to leave it in the hands of a private banker. If, again, instead of the money so drawn from the Bank, being left by the pay-master in the hands of his private banker, it had been left in the hands of sub-accountants, that would have been more agreeable to the forms of the office, but certainly it would not be safer for the public. The question, therefore, appears to me, to be whether Lord Melville authorized any other money to be drawn from the Bank, than what might legally be drawn? And it is my opinion, the public has suffered nothing, the law has suffered nothing, not a hair of its head has been violated. If I was asked, whether I would prefer placing the balances in my hands, in the iron chest of the office, or in the hands of a private banker, I should now certainly prefer the iron chest: not that I think it more secure, nor yet as secure, but because, after the dreadful experience of the consequences which might result to me personally, from lodging it at a private banker's, after seeing the misfortune which it has occasioned to Lord Melville, I should not venture to do so, even if I were convinced in my own judgment that it was the safer and the better way.

Without dwelling longer on the disgusting transactions of Mr. Trotter and his accounts, I

should wish to ask gentlemen on the other side, do they believe the evidence of Lord Melville, or do they not; or do they only believe such parts of it as makes for them, and reject all that makes against them? If you do believe the evidence of Lord Melville, how can any person, in conscience or in sense, reject that account which he gave at first, without the least disguise, as to his knowledge of Mr. Trotter's gains, and which he has again distinctly explained in his speech last night? What could be more natural than for him to suppose that Trotter might derive some small emolument, in the nature of a per centage, on the money deposited by him in the hands of his private banker? Such is the universal custom in Scotland; and I have made particular inquiries, and find it is the custom also at many of the country bankers in this country, with many of our principal merchants, and even with some bankers in London. It was natural for him to suppose that this was all the profit which Mr. Trotter made, and that a small and incidental advantage of that sort was not contrary to the law. It could not then be contrary to the custom of Parliament, or to the respect due to this House, to speak freely on those topics upon which the resolutions may have been grounded. The time is now come when we must see that it is absolutely necessary for us to review the evidence upon which the resolutions were grounded. While we kept the business in

our own hands, it was sufficient for us if we were satisfied with the evidence; but when we go farther, and propose prosecutions, we must consider whether we have any evidence that can legally support the conclusions we would wish to draw. In our proceedings in this House, it is incumbent on the party accused to bring forward evidence to discharge himself; but if we are determined to send the matter to be tried before other tribunals, it is we that must bring forward legal evidence to support our prosecution; and, therefore, before we decide on a prosecution, it appears to me absolutely necessary to consider whether there has been any evidence which would legally be sufficient to support it. It has been admitted by almost every gentleman who has spoken on this subject, that if there had appeared nothing more against Lord Melville than what was on the face of the tenth report, it would be inconsistent with the former decisions of the House to propose any new measure of punishment. They allow that the loss of his situation as first lord of the Admiralty, and his name being struck out of the list of privy counsellors, was as great punishment as the House of Commons meant to inflict for the violation of law stated in the tenth report; and they say, that if nothing new had appeared in the present report, it would be unjust and inconsistent to propose now any thing more than what has been already proposed. I shall therefore consider, what it is that has now

been disclosed which aggravates the complexion of that guilt which appeared on the face of the tenth report. At the time that you passed those resolutions, it was confessed that sixty thousand pounds of the public money had been diverted to purposes not naval; but since that time forty thousand pounds have been accounted for in a manner that is perfectly satisfactory to many gentlemen, and certainly in a manner that cannot be considered by any body as an aggravation. Where then is your new fact? You passed those resolutions when sixty thousand pounds were unaccounted for, and now you are called upon to take much severer measures, when only twenty thousand pounds remain to be accounted for. On the resolutions you first passed, Lord Melville has been punished—most severely punished. I cannot conceive what stuff that man's heart is made of, who can say he has not been punished. It now turns out, that the greater part of the money, which was then unaccounted for, is now perfectly and satisfactorily accounted for; and that what at first appeared so illegal, will hardly now be called any thing more than irregular. The ten thousand pounds which Lord Melville confesses he borrowed from Mr. Trotter, for his subscription to the loyalty loan, and which he afterwards replaced, was not a circumstance, which, standing by itself, could at all induce such a degree of suspicion, as to be a ground for very vindictive proceedings. As to the great impru-

dence of Lord Melville about his private affairs. I am perfectly ready to admit it. I consider that it was most highly imprudent in him to have employed the same man with whom he was connected in office, to be his private agent. For this imprudence he has paid most dearly; and certainly, if, instead of employing Mr. Trotter as his agent, he had employed any other person of property or connections, it would have been no extraordinary demand for a person in his situation, and with his income, to apply to his agent to procure him the means of subscribing ten thousand pounds to the loyalty loan, which as his lordship expressly stated yesterday, he intended to sell out immediately after the instalments were paid. This would certainly have been an accommodation no greater than he might have expected from any other agent, and it is only from the circumstance of Mr. Trotter being at that time paymaster of the navy, that this sum of ten thousand pounds makes so considerable a figure in that account. To this imprudence, in appointing Mr. Trotter his private agent, was added, the imprudence of confiding too much in him, and a negligence in not watching him as he ought. His confidence was misplaced, and he was blameable in not sufficiently watching him; but surely that was not a sort of blame which would ever induce the House to add to the severity of the punishment they had already inflicted.

As to the point of the releases, an honourable gentleman (Mr. Bond) has stated them as if they had been locked up in a private box, and were intended to be carefully concealed from every eye. I think I have a right to complain of the honourable gentleman's stating such a thing as this on an occasion of such great importance, when it is impossible for him to know the fact to be as he has stated, and when I firmly believe the fact to be entirely otherwise.

He seems to speak with doubt of the registering, and considers the execution of that paper as proof of a conspiracy between Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter. This circumstance has already been explained, and it can hardly be imagined that Lord Melville could be so foolish as to contrive so weak a plan for executing a deed to do that which could be done as effectually without a deed and without admitting any other person into the secret. It has been urged as an aggravation to the criminality of violating the law, that he himself was the maker of it; ont he other hand, it might full as well be argued, that in a case of the doubtful construction of an Act of Parliament, he who made the Act was most likely to understand the meaning of it. It would be hard that his authority should be counted as nothing in the construction of the Act, but that it should be reckoned as a great aggravation of his offence in violating, not his construction of the Act, but yours.

It has been said, that Lord Melville bill's was exactly the same as that for regulating the Paymaster of the Army, and that the cases were precisely similar. There was however, a very marked distinction between them. In the army the detailed payments were made by the different army agents, and the payments made at the paymaster's office were so few and so simple that there could be no occasion for drawing money from the Bank. The reason of Lord Melville's bill was, however, very different; before that time almost every successive Treasurer of the Navy, on quitting the office, carried with him large balances of the public money, and was responsible for the payments due in his time; the consequence of which was, that there were at the same time no less than three ex-treasurers of the navy, all having large balances in their hands. To remedy these inconveniences, Lord Melville's Act provided that, in fact, there should be in future but one Treasurer of the Navy; that each, at his departure from office, should hand over his balances to his successor; and that those different balances should be formed into an aggregate sum which should be deposited in the Bank, and only drawn out under certain circumstances. Could any thing be more absurd than to suppose that when Lord Melville framed this law he had it in his contemplation to break it, and to break it for a consideration so very trifling and paltry as those sums are which he is supposed to have gained

from the employment of the public money? I have also been informed, from inquiries I lately made at the Bank, that the original power given by Lord Melville to Mr. Trotter was very strictly drawn up and worded, and perfectly agreeable to the Act. The reason I can speak positively on that fact is this: I called at the Bank lately to know what was the proper form of an authority to give to a paymaster whom I lately appointed. I was then given the form of Lord Melville's power to Mr. Trotter, as being much more strictly drawn up than any of the preceding powers. I mention this circumstance to shew that Lord Melville could not at that time have had any deliberate intention of violating his own Act; and if he almost immediately did allow Mr. Trotter to draw money from the Bank in a manner that appears to this House a violation of the law, it could only have been that he construed the law upon this point differently from the manner in which the House has since construed it.

I must again ask, where are the new facts which should now induce the House to inflict new and severer punishment? We all recollect the impression that was on the public mind at the time those resolutions were passed; we then heard of the immense profits, of the enormous gains which Lord Melville must have made of the public money; and now those enormous profits are diminished so far that by the highest statement

they do not exceed two thousand pounds per annum. I must confess I was astonished at this falling off, and nothing can appear clearer to me than that the supposed injury, which it was thought the public had received, has now dwindled into almost nothing. It certainly will not be said that this sum of two thousand pounds was the occasion of fresh loans and taxes. I agree most perfectly with the observation of Lord Melville yesterday, " that the time is not far distant when the unnatural magnitude to which the offence (if offence it was) has been swelled, would subside, and his character be rescued from the obloquy which now attends it." Under the circumstance of the great confusion and mixture in Mr. Trotter's accounts, was it possible for Lord Melville to say positively whether he had or had not received some profit from the public money? No man can say positively whether or not he has received public money. If a man sells his horse, it is impossible for him to say, whether what he receives as the price of it is or is not public money.

The circumstances under which the examination of Lord Melville took place were somewhat extraordinary. He received a very polite note from the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, requesting his attendance to explain to them the manner of doing business in the office of the Treasurer of the Navy. He attended the invitation, without in the least suspecting that the examination was to be

pointed against him. A few questions were asked him, to which he replied. They then printed their report, and this was what was called his trial. If a man, without any notice that any charge was intended against him, should be requested by a judge's letter to come to the Old Bailey, and should there be asked a few questions, would that be considered as a trial? The questions in this case were all prepared and concerted, the answers were given without suspicion and without time for much consideration. There is a sum of five thousand pounds, which, it appears, was but lately replaced, but until lately there was no one authorized to receive it.

As to the business of Jellicoe, it is confessed on all hands that the debt was contracted before Lord Melville's treasurership; and the only blame attempted to be laid to his charge in this respect is, that having it in his power to ruin Mr. Jellicoe at once, he preferred making some arrangement, by which some part of the debt was recovered for the public. The very circumstance of the great default of Mr. Jellicoe serves to prove that it was safer that the balances of public money should be left in the hands of the paymaster or his private banker, than that it should continue, as it had done before, in the hands of failing sub-accountants—of other Mr. Jellicoes. I have now gone through the principal grounds on which those resolutions appear to me to have been

founded: and I will put it to the feelings of every man who hears me, whether it ever could have been the intention of the House to inflict their punishments at different times, to wait as it were, until his stripes were healed, in order to give additional torment, and to prolong the pain? This would not be suitable to the genius or disposition of the people of this country; it would not be the road to public favour; on the contrary, the way to public favour in this country would be by that of justice: to hear all, to inquire into all, and to punish once for all; but even this severity is not equal to some other people's mercy. The honourable member who has recommended what he has called the lenient course, wishes to deprive him of the privilege of being tried by his peers. It should be considered that men in high situations are much exposed to the envy of men comparatively little, who would have pleasure in trampling on those who once were high and great. On this account I think he ought to be tried by his peers, if there should be any occasion to try him at all. I must confess that I feel, however, much astonished that there should be gentlemen who seem to wish that the civil suit should be stopped, merely in the hope that a greater punishment might be obtained by the criminal prosecution; but that if that failed, they would like to have recourse to the civil suit again. I hope that such a sentiment as this will never be generally felt in

this country, and that such a conduct will never be adopted by this House.

The House divided on the original motion—

For the impeachment	195
Against it	272
Majority against it	77

This motion being therefore lost, the House again divided on Mr. Bond's amendment for a criminal prosecution against Lord Melville, when the numbers were—

For the criminal prosecution	238
Against it	229
Majority for the criminal prosecution	9

Adjourned at six o'clock on Friday morning.

PAYMENT OF MR. PITT'S DEBTS.

FEBRUARY 3, 1806.

Mr. Cartwright moved "that an humble address be presented to His Majesty to represent to His Majesty, that this House having received information that on the death of the Right Hon. Wm. Pitt, he left debts to a considerable amount, for the payment of which his property has been found insufficient, and being desirous to shew every testi-

mony of their esteem and respect for the memory of the said Right Hon. Wm. Pitt, most humbly beseech His Majesty to advance a sum not exceeding £40,000 towards the payment of the said debts, and to assure His Majesty that this House will make good the same."

Mr. Bootle seconded the motion.

Mr. Windham supported it. He did not think that any dangerous precedent would be set by this measure. If the debts of Mr. Pitt had been contracted by profusion and excess, by dissipation and vain luxuries, they might admit of a question. But they were not contracted by lavish expenditure, or useless ostentation. Mr. Pitt's salary was not enough to provide the indulgences suited to his station, and the consequence was seen in the incurring these debts. Insufficiency of salary, want of pecuniary attention, and the necessary impositions to which he was exposed, must have combined to embarrass his affairs. He therefore considered that in the part the House were now called upon to act, they were not indulging themselves in an improper sentiment of liberality, nor catching at any transient reputation of magnanimity, nor wasting the public money; nor should he think so, even were they to make some provision for those who were most near and dear to the deceased.

Mr. Fox supported the motion: he conceived it to be a tribute to departed worth—the reward of a great and munificent nation to a meritorious servant of the public. At the same time, he wished that it might be understood, that he maintained all his former opinions quite unaltered.

Indeed if there had been any words in the present resolution expressive of any approbation of Mr. Pitt's measures, it would be impossible that it could pass with unanimity. Mr. Pitt was minister for twenty years, and to the best of his knowledge, except the wardenship of the Cinque Ports, he (Mr. F.) did not know any one office connected with him of a personal nature. He had not only the merit of general disinterestedness, but preserved in every particular that distinguished feature. To this praise, which might indeed with equal justice be paid to every prime minister, since the accession of the House of Brunswick, Mr. Pitt was entitled; and he (Mr. F.) thought we should bestow it in such a manner, that if he knew what was now going on, it would not give him pain. The motion had his cordial support.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, I had hoped I should not have been called upon to say any thing in support of the present motion. Feeling, however, that after some observations which have been made, I ought not to remain silent, I hope in the little that I shall say, I shall not deviate from the candour and moderation so laudably professed on the other side; but used at the same time as a veil to cover one or two propositions in which I do not agree. Some gentlemen on the opposite side of the House are willing to allow Parliament to discharge the debts of my late right honourable

friend, as a matter of generosity towards an old public servant. I wish it to be known, however that the friends of that illustrious person will not be satisfied to receive the vote as an eleemosynary grant to posthumous necessities;— not as the boon of pity or compassion, but as a public debt to a highly meritorious public servant. I was not from the beginning so sanguine as to expect an unanimous vote; I would not purchase unanimity by conceding a tittle of the high and splendid services of my illustrious friend. If I might refer to the debate of a former night,* I would appeal to the House whether it was not on the other side that the topics of dissension were started? Objections were made on that occasion to the form of the motion. The fault that I found with it, as well as with the present resolution was, that it was cold and inadequate to the feelings of those who supported it. When the friends of the great man who was the subject of these motions, consented to neutralize the expression of their feelings for the purpose of removing the grounds of opposition to the motion;—when they resolved, instead of dipping the pen into the heart, to look into the cold forms of the statute book for a precedent;—when they had lowered and diluted every glowing sentiment;—when they had re-

* The night on which a resolution for a public funeral to Mr. Pitt was proposed and carried.

restained and chastised their feelings, in order to constitute unanimity—the result has added to the many proofs that I have met with in the course of my political life, that nothing is to be gained by compromise. The nice canvassing of particular points began on the other side, and in a quarter, too, which took a great share in all those transactions which are now the subject of criticism and condemnation.—

Mr. C. Wynne called the right honourable gentleman to order; it being irregular to revert to former debates.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, I have no desire to go back farther than to shew, that the agitation of the objects of dissension originated on the other side. It was expected by those who brought forward this motion in such general terms, that it would have been very generally supported. However widely political differences might have ranged, it was hoped that now all those differences would be buried in the grave, and that all political animosities would cease; that it would be said—

"All thy good
Now blazes, all thy guilt is in the grave."

That brilliant luminary, whether its dawn was clouded or its meridian splendour obscured, had held a course glorious for the country, and worthy to call forth its admiration and its gratitude. I

protest against the mode in which some honourable gentlemen yield their assent to the motion, and I wish to restore to them the benefit of that consistency, which they labour so much to reconcile with the support they give. I give credit to the honourable gentleman (Mr. W. Smith) who refused his consent, because he did not see the merit. I confess I do not see the ground on which some honourable gentlemen opposite to me followed a different course. If the grant be given as an eleemosynary grant, without any distinction of merit or demerit, I disdain it. I cannot help complaining, that one honourable gentleman opposite, (Mr. Fox), while professing to avoid all points of political dissension, has cast a general stigma on the whole system of the present reign, during one half of which my right honourable friend had been at the head of affairs. This was not in the recollection of the honourable gentleman when he took credit to himself this night for not being one of those who introduced such topics. I beg gentlemen again and again to consider on what ground they agree to the motion. Those who do not vote for it on the ground of Mr. Pitt's merits, had better oppose it openly. It is only as a tribute to great merits that we—his friends—consent to receive it; and if any one support the grant, on any other ground than as a testimony and a reward of those merits, we wish him to withdraw

his support, and preserve his consistency by opposing it.

The question was carried *nem. con.**

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S SEAT IN THE CABINET.

MARCH 3d, 1806.

Mr. Spencer Stanhope moved the following resolutions:—

First.—That it is the opinion of this House, that it is highly expedient that the functions of a minister of state, and a confidential adviser of the executive measures of Government, should be kept distinct and separate from those of a judge at common law.

Secondly.—That it is the opinion of this House, that those members of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, whom His Majesty is advised to direct to be habitually summoned, and who are so summoned to that committee, or selection of the said council which deli-

* Mr. Pitt died on the 23rd of January, 1806. In the course of the month of February a complete change of Ministers took place. A Whig Administration was formed under Lord Grenville, as Prime Minister, and Mr. Fox, who took the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Sheridan succeeded Mr. Canning as Treasurer of the Navy. Mr. C. continued his constant attendance on Parliament, and became the most active and leading member of the New Opposition.

berates upon matters of state, and which is commonly known by the name of the Cabinet Council, are, and are deemed to be, the confidential ministers and advisers of the executive measures of Government.

Thirdly.—That the so summoning to the said committee or cabinet council a Lord Chief Justice of England, to sit and deliberate as a member of the same, is a practice peculiarly inexpedient and unadvisable, tending to expose to suspicion, and bring into disrepute the independence and impartiality of the judicial character, and to render less satisfactory, if not less pure, the administration of justice.

On the question being put on the first resolution—

Mr. Bond opposed it, and moved as an amendment, "That the other orders of the day be now read."

Mr. Canning* complained that the right honourable gentleman who spoke last, had said that at a moment when the union of all the talents that could possibly be collected was so necessary to meet the dangers and difficulties by which the country was at this moment so peculiarly weighed down, he (Mr. C.) and his friends were attempting to drive from His Majesty's councils a person of the most eminent talents, acknowledged virtues, manly judgment, and unquestionable integrity. He for one protested against this most unfair mode of arguing. When a question of this nature was brought forward, if he had his wish, allusions to personal character would form no part of the subject. If the question were at all worthy of attention, and that it was, the right honourable gentleman himself admitted, when he told us that this affair had made a deep impression on the country, and that the

grounds on which it was supported appeared at first view extremely plausible; if it were at all worthy of attention, then it was fitting that it should be discussed on its own merits, as relating to a Chief Justice, and not as referring to any particular individual. It was, therefore, he contended, unfair in the right honourable gentleman to impute any motive whatever to them that pointed at the character of Lord Ellenborough, when they in fact argued not from the unfitness of that noble and learned lord in particular to fill a situation in the Cabinet, but from the unfitness of the place for any person who held the office of Lord Chief Justice. If the high talents and integrity of Lord Ellenborough were deemed so essential in the Cabinet—and to every thing that could be said in his praise he was perfectly willing to subscribe—then there was an obvious mode of availing themselves of those talents and that integrity, by advancing the noble and learned lord one step higher, and putting into his hands the great seal; and after the panegyrics which had been lavished on the independence of the noble and learned lord, he could not believe that he had refused to accept this promotion, from the consideration that it was better to retain a place for life, than accept the precarious office of Lord High Chancellor.

But, not contented with asserting that a judge might with propriety sit in the Cabinet, the right honourable gentleman also maintained that his very independence rendered him one of the fittest persons in the world for such a situation, because he could give his opinions unwarped and unbiassed by any consideration of self-interest. He (Mr. C.) viewed the matter, however, in a very different light from that in which

it was regarded by the right honourable gentleman.* He thought that the holding a situation which was in its nature precarious, and yet an object of ambition, had a tendency to destroy the confidence which resulted from the independence of the Judge. He trusted he could not be here misunderstood, so far as to be thought to allude to any particular individual. He only viewed the point in the abstract, and contended that when you placed in the situation above referred to, a person who by law had been jealously made independent, you did in a great measure do away the effects of that independence. This would be evident, if once it was admitted, and it could not be denied that the removal of a Lord Chief Justice from a place which was an object of ambition, would be attended with some degree of discredit to him; for, to avoid this discredit, there would at least, on some occasions, be a temptation for him to act in a manner not altogether consistent with his duty and character. That it was an object of ambition to hold a place in the Cabinet, he thought could not be denied. The thing had of late been abundantly proved; for it was impossible to converse in the street, or read the newspapers during the last six weeks, without knowing how eagerly such places were sought after. In four instances it had been lately proved that Cabinet places were considered as objects of ambition, in addition to other efficient situations. He therefore, he supposed, might take it for granted that a place in the Cabinet was an object of ambition; and when this was admitted, the matter of

* Mr. Bond.

salaries and emoluments made very little difference in the present question.

He (Mr. C.) agreed in the panegyrics that had been pronounced on the administration of justice in this country. It was one of the greatest blessings, if not the very greatest, of our constitution. It was no less firm than it was valuable. It had withstood the shock of parties, of usurpation, and of rebellion. To what cause were we to attribute this? Not to any particular statute by which the distinction between the judicial and the executive powers had been established, but from the universal feeling and sentiment that such a distinction ought to exist, and that with the exception of a very few instances it had existed. But, if the administration of justice in the country was thus admirable, it was the most important of all duties, and would afford ample employment for all the talents, virtues, integrity, and every other excellent qualification, which had been justly ascribed to the noble and learned lord who at present occupied the situation of Lord Chief Justice. What he objected to was this, that instead of confining the attention of any Lord Chief Justice to the discharge of his duty in that capacity, which would afford him full and ample employment, we were starting other objects of ambition to which his views might be directed. He would indeed still pursue the objects which were more intimately connected with his profession; but instead of building his fame on the strict and honourable administration of justice, he might be aspiring after other objects of ambition. A most serious evil was thus introduced, which would be done away by the passing of these

motions; or if that could not be hoped for, he would at least indulge the expectation that it would be remedied by the mature and unbiassed reflection of those persons who now formed His Majesty's administration.

There was one very great fault and error into which the right honourable gentleman had fallen, for his argument seemed to imply that independence was not so absolutely necessary in a Judge as had been imagined; but then he said that there was always a remedy in case of error. But the point was to guard, if possible, against all chance of error from any bias of the Judge in the first instance. The right honourable gentleman's argument went to this extent: suppose the case of a libel, he said that the matter did not so much rest with the Judge as with the jury, and after all a new trial might be granted. But, was that the way in which the right honourable gentleman thought a great constitutional question ought to be treated? Was that the way in which a measure ought to be discussed, which, by his own admission, had made so great an impression on the feelings of the country? But then he said, that in the agitation of particular questions in the Cabinet, the noble and learned lord might, if it was thought expedient, avoid attending. This might undoubtedly be the case, but was this the sort of security which ought to be enjoyed in this free country?

It was well known there was no positive law existing at present which opposed this measure, and therefore it could not properly perhaps be called illegal, and it might not be correct to call it unconstitutional, till the point was clearly

established. But what he (Mr. C.) said was, that it was extremely inconvenient, and contrary to the principles of reason and common sense, that the judicial and executive powers should be combined in the same person. As to the point of suspicion, it was certain that no man was obliged to remove from a situation where he was useful, merely because others chose to suspect him without reason. But if, however, an alarm was by this means occasioned relative to a matter of such great importance as the present, and if it was not necessary or very expedient that the cause of such alarm, however unfounded, should exist, he thought it was proper that it should become a legislative object, and that every occasion of suspicion should be done away. He was surprised to hear from the right honourable gentleman, who was a lawyer, that it was a matter of no great consequence that suspicions should exist respecting the independence of a Judge. There would always, in such a case, be doubts respecting the justice of his decisions; therefore, though there might be a remedy, it was better that there should be in the first instance no cause even for suspicion of a bias. But the right honourable gentleman complained not only of the terms of the resolutions, but said that they did not go far enough in practice; for, in order to be effectual, they ought to go so far as to deprive a Lord Chief Justice not only of a place in the Cabinet, but also of his place in the Privy Council, and of a peerage. He would not, however, enter particularly on this point. But with regard to the Cabinet, the right honourable gentleman said that it was not recognised by the constitution, and that, in fact, it

was nothing else than a select committee of the Privy Council, called at the discretion of His Majesty. He never heard a more untenable proposition. In a free country such as this, where a controul was necessary, and where responsibility must necessarily lodge somewhere, were we at this day to be turned round upon by being told that there was no such thing in the constitution as a Cabinet? We had persons who advised with His Majesty, who performed all the functions of Government, who were known as the Cabinet, who were known all over London and the country to be so; but the moment we entered this door, then we were told that there was no Cabinet! It might be true, indeed, that the constitution recognized nothing under the name of the Cabinet, but it was not the less certain that there was such an assembly with whom the responsibility for whatever advice they gave His Majesty rested. Now, as to the question of responsibility, the right honourable gentleman allowed that every individual who joined the Council in advising His Majesty, was responsible for the whole. Lord Ellenborough then might be responsible for the whole; and if this was the case, he would beg of gentlemen to consider whether on the principles of reason and common sense, or those laid down by the best authorities, whether a Judge ought to be placed in a situation where it would be utterly impossible for him to divest himself entirely of the feelings of party, and which would naturally render him liable to suspicion?

Now, with respect to the class of examples mentioned by the right honourable gentleman, there was a great and

evident distinction between them and the case under consideration. It was not by any means unfit that a Judge should form part of a council, which was to preserve the rights of sovereigns, but where no party politics prevailed. But here, in fact, the Judge was under the controul of the Executive Government, and instantly became a party politician; and if ever there could be cases where he should doubt whether it was proper that Judges should occupy places as regents or governors, it would be in cases where these Judges had in the first place been Cabinet Ministers. The case of Lord Hardwicke he understood to be given up [*No*, *no*, from the other side]. He certainly had heard nothing positively asserted on that head. But the truth was, that he, after accepting the office of the Chancellor, had held his former situation for a short time, merely till a successor could be appointed. Why, he would give them another instance of this kind. Lord Eldon had for two months subsequent to his acceptance of the Chancellorship, held his former office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, till his successor could be appointed. Why, then, they remained with the single example of Lord Mansfield. The right honourable gentleman had said that Lord Mansfield had held both situations, and no notice had been taken of it by Parliament, although the thing must have been notorious. Now, though positive evidence could not be had on this subject, yet he could bring circumstantial evidence that the thing was not generally known. There were surmises about it, and as often as it was alluded to, it was marked with reprobation. In-

deed, thirteen years afterwards, his having sat in the Cabinet while Lord Chief Justice, was imputed to him as a charge by the father of a noble Lord opposite (Lord H. Petty), and the question directly put to him, whether or not the thing was true? This was put in the most forcible terms, and Lord Mansfield admitted it, but said that he had, for some time, begged leave not to act as an efficient member. From this it appeared that the example was by no means notorious; and it was still more evident from the remark of Lord Shelburne, who said, "that the noble Lord had confessed that there was a time when he had infringed the principles of the constitution by acting as a Cabinet Minister and as Lord Chief Justice at the same time." This was the remark of Lord Shelburne, who continued by observing, "that the excellence of the British constitution lay in keeping the executive and judicial powers as separate and distinct as possible." And why? Not for the reason given by the right honourable gentleman, but "that a person might not be under the necessity of advising in one capacity what he might be called upon to execute in another." This example then fell to the ground. No one was more ready to acknowledge a high admiration of the talents of Lord Mansfield than he was, but he would ask any person who had read the history of these times, whether that noble and learned Judge would not have done much more essential service to his country if he had not mixed the character of the politician with that of the Judge? But you had the example of his maturer judgment against that of his earlier

years; for by refusing to act as a Cabinet Minister after the year 1765, he in some measure tacitly condemned his former conduct. The only defence that could be offered for the admission of the Chief Justice into the Cabinet would be necessity, or strong expediency; but neither had been proved. There was an attempt to prove the expediency; but as to the necessity, the proof had not even been attempted.

But having failed in the way of example, the right honourable gentleman had recourse to analogy, and observed that the Lord Chancellor was a Cabinet Minister; and said, that he would not be answered here with the remark that the Chancellor had nothing to do with criminal causes. But he must be answered in this way, and the Chancellor could be removed in two ways, either by the Crown, which would not continue to employ a servant who might be disliked; or by an address of Parliament, for malversation in office But, suppose Lord Ellenborough should give the worst advice that could be conceived to His Majesty; suppose he should advise him to trample on all laws, or throw them into the fire, what could be done? Could you remove him from his office of Chief Justice, in which he had committed no malversation? Or could you address the throne to remove him from the Cabinet? For his part he could conceive no greater curse to a free country, than an irremovable Cabinet Minister.

Now, these were the grounds on which he supported the motion. He allowed all the talents and virtues that had been ascribed to the noble and learned Judge, and

had no doubt that their application would be found of no little use in the Cabinet, were it not that he held a situation utterly incompatible, in his ideas, with the proper discharge of its duties. He thought it therefore unwise in the greatest degree to place him in a situation which might bring suspicion on his judicial character. The example was supported by no analogy. No expediency was proved, and the proof of a necessity had not even been attempted. He valued highly the noble and learned lord's abilities; but he thought the administration of the municipal justice of the country, a matter of such infinite importance, that he would not purchase all the services which for years his talents could render in the Cabinet, as a Minister, for a suspicion of one hour attached to his character as a Judge.

The House divided, when there appeared—

For Mr. Stanhope's motion .	64
Against it	222
Majority	158

MUTINY BILL—LIMITED SERVICE.

May 30th, 1806.

Mr. Secretary Windham, on the House resolving itself into a Committee on the Mutiny Bill, read the alterations which it was his intention to propose in the form of the enlistment oath. After specifying the age of the re-

cruit; and that he did not belong to the militia, he proposed that it should proceed to declare, that he engaged to serve His Majesty for ——— years, which he would fill up with the word *seven;* and also for such further period as His Majesty should direct, not exceeding —— years, which he proposed to fill up with the word *three*, but which should terminate at the expiration of a period of six following months of uninterrupted peace. That if the recruit should happen to be under eighteen years of age, so many years should be added to the period of service, as should prevent the term of seven years from beginning to run until he was actually eighteen years of age. That every soldier abroad at the expiration of his service should be sent home free of expence, and on his arrival in Great Britain should receive the usual allowance of marching money, to carry him to his particular parish or place, if in Great Britain, at the time he was entitled to his discharge, and also to the allowance of marching money. These were the only alterations which he had at present to propose; at the same time the House must feel that in a case so varied, it was impossible to provide for every contingency which might possibly present itself, by legislative provision. The measure was not irrevocable further than related to the army it might raise. He denied, however, that it was an experiment which we were not called upon to make, or that by it we were parting with men with whom we were not of necessity obliged to part. That some new measures should be adopted, some new inducement to recruiting held out, was shown from the failure and inefficiency of the several

compulsory measures resorted to within the last fifteen years to increase the army. The attempt to increase the Militia by calling out the supplementary part of them had failed. Peace ensued. After which the war came, and found our military establishments low, and this scheme was again resorted to with an addition which made it still more compulsory, and that was the quarterly penalties which were imposed on the counties. Then came the Army of Reserve, which was followed by the Additional Force Act.

He would not now discuss these measures, nor "draw their frailties from their dread abode." He only referred to them merely to shew that they had failed to answer the purpose for which they were intended, and that, therefore, there was a necessity for something new. The only option we had was either to procure men by voluntary or forcible means, or we might have a combination of both. For his part, with the experience of the failure of compulsory enlistment, he would now try the effects of voluntary enlistment, and would use no means but that of making the article of proper value to the purchaser. All that could be done was to bring the advantages of the service home to the feelings and understandings of those who might be disposed to engage in it. The present plan had this advantage, that it would remove one great impediment to the recruiting service, by binding the service to a shorter period than a man's life, and leaving his discharge somewhat independent of the person who employed him. The inconveniences and evils which it had been said would attend this measure, might be comprized under three general

heads; first, the effect it would produce on the character of the army; secondly, its effects with regard to the colonial service; and thirdly, the loss of those members that would be discharged at the end of the terms. The supposition of the effect of the plan being prejudicial to the character of the army, in his opinion, had no foundation. Look to France, which in point of military regulations had been a model to Europe: there limited service prevailed under a monarchy which had lasted 1400 years. As to the discharge of a soldier during the war, nobody could deny that that must be often inconvenient; so likewise it was often to pay money at the exact time at which it was due, and some would not pay at all; but it would be very odd persons should argue from this that there should be no regulation for the payment of debts.

The whole experience of the European service was in favour of the present plan. In the Austrian service there were various modes of recruiting, and at short periods. He would ask whether gentlemen had ever heard of such a people as the Swiss? There never were better troops, and yet all the regiments were engaged only for a term of years, and were discharged even in time of war. As to the inconvenience arising from discharging men in time of war, this periodical permission to leave the army would have no effect that could justly cause the smallest alarm before a very distant time, so that he could scarcely give the gentlemen any credit for their fears. From calculations which he had made, twelve years must elapse, indeed, fifteen years

must elapse before we lost one-twelfth of these men, supposing they took their discharges as early as possible.

As to the inconvenience that might arise to the colonial service, that was a point which might be reduced to a very narrow compass. The inconvenience might be met by providing different regulations for that service and by other means. The danger was trifling, while the period was only for seven years, as it was before; and when, as now, the period was ten years, the danger was greatly diminished. Besides, in the East India Company's service the men were enlisted only for five years. The most perfect good faith was kept with them, and the East India Company found the benefit of recruiting for this period. In reference to the third point—the loss of those members that would be discharged at the end of the terms—he admitted that the discharge of the men at the end of these periods must be considered as a sacrifice. This was following the improvements of civilized life. As reason and civilization advanced, men saw the necessity of such sacrifices; all the improvements in our agriculture, in our commerce, and in many other things, proceeded upon the principle which taught us to sacrifice a present advantage for a future greater one. The opinions of military men had not so much weight with him in this case as in many others. An officer looking at his fine regiment, his grenadiers, with none under five feet ten in the front ranks, could not perhaps bear to think of parting with them; the same feeling would be felt by a planter when he saw the axe applied to some of the finest plants, though this was absolutely ne-

cessary for the benefit of the grove. If an instance might be taken from agriculture, he might mention that of turnip husbandry, which though introduced in the beginning of the last century had made very slow progress, and even as yet was by no means general, because it involved a sacrifice on the part of the owner. First feelings, therefore, on this subject were nothing. The plan he now proposed, proceeded upon that enlightened avarice, if he might say so, which overturned the vulgar maxim, "get all you can, and keep all you get." This was the conduct dictated by first feelings, till experience, and more extended knowledge taught mankind, that by keeping all they got they did not always get what they might. The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving that the clause be added to the bill.

Sir James Pulteney, and Mr. Yorke, opposed the adoption of the clause; it was supported by General Loftus, and Colonel Crawford.

Mr. Canning—I cannot reconcile it, Sir, to my sense of duty as a member of Parliament, to suffer a question of such magnitude to be hurried to a decision in this extraordinary manner. Instead of that precipitancy which now appears to be intended, we surely ought to proceed with more than usual caution in a case which involves so important an innovation in one of the most important establishments of the country. Minis-

ters must either have a most extraordinary confidence in themselves, or expect an unlimited confidence from others, if they imagine that the House can be prevailed upon to concur in a measure of such magnitude, and to sanction changes so hazardous, with no better reasons than they have yet assigned, and no more satisfactory explanation than they have yet condescended to give to the objections which have been stated. I cannot but consider the manner in which this subject has been brought forward, as being almost as great an innovation in the constitutional practice of Parliament, as the measure itself is in the system of our army. This, I believe, is the first instance in our parliamentary history, in which it has been attempted to introduce a fundamental change in an established system, merely by a clause introduced in a committee upon a bill, and that bill one which must of necessity be passed within a limited time, at the hazard of leaving us without an army. The Mutiny Bill has already been renewed three times in the course of the present year: the last which we passed will expire on a given day; and we are plainly told, that we must abridge our deliberations on this bill which is now before us, in order that it may receive the sanction of the Legislature, before that which it is to replace expires. I desire the House to consider, whether this was a fair

and fit situation in which to place us, for the discussion of a question requiring so much caution and deliberation?

I have always understood it to be the practice of this House, when any matter of great importance, and especially any matter that goes to affect the fundamental establishments of the country, was to be submitted to its consideration, to multiply the stages of discussion, by originating the subject of the bill in a previous committee of the whole House. In that committee, it may be matter of debate, whether any measure upon the subject shall be received for discussion? and after that question has been deliberated and affirmed, then remain all the ordinary stages in which the bill itself is liable to discussion. But I am confident that this is the first instance in which the opportunities of deliberation have been diminished in proportion to the novelty, magnitude, and doubtful policy of the measure; in which a project for effecting a complete revolution in one part of our national defence has been proposed to be passed into a law through fewer stages of deliberation than a turnpike bill. I beg pardon, the first it is not; my right honourable friend (Mr. Yorke) has already referred to the solitary and disgraceful precedent of the last year of Queen Anne, when a clause of similar purport was introduced into the Mutiny Bill, apparently

without the notice or knowledge of the parliament of that time. But, with this exception, the right honourable gentleman will not easily find any thing in history to countenance his practice; and I am sure he will not find any thing to justify it. The right honourable gentleman has reduced Parliament to the dilemma either of foregoing the due exercise of its deliberative functions on a measure so momentous in its consequences, or of suffering the army to disband, while we are considering on the best mode of maintaining it. And if this observation applies to this House, where we have the bill now before us, and where, I trust, we shall persist in keeping it as long as we continue to entertain doubts of its policy, how much more forcibly does it apply to the House of Lords, where, in exact proportion to the difficulties which are felt here, and the time which is taken to remove them, the means and opportunities of that discussion which the lords are equally entitled to give to every subject of national interest, must necessarily be abridged and taken away! How much more forcibly does it apply to the third power of the constitution, to the Crown; to whom it is probable that this bill, changing the whole tenure by which the army of the Crown is held, must be presented for that approbation which is to pass it into a law, within a period so near to the expiration of the present mutiny bill, that the King can hardly have a

moment to pause, much less to exercise his judgment and discretion! I admit that this last objection would not generally apply to a measure introduced into the House by the King's Ministers, because the introduction by them would generally imply the approbation and recommendation of the Crown:—that this is not the case in the present instance, we have but too much reason to apprehend—I should rather say perhaps we have great reason to hope; because I should trust that there might be a chance of some interposition on the part of the Crown, if not in the legislative enactments, at least in the practical execution of this measure, such as might remedy, in some degree, the consequences, if it could not entirely prevent the first effect of the rashness and precipitancy of Ministers;—I say I should hope this, if it were not that the clause which we are discussing, is so framed (and I must say I think most improperly so framed) as to take away all discretion from the Crown hereafter, in the executive regulation, no less than in the legislative provision; to curtail and abridge the royal prerogative, in that particular in which it has been the practice (and I think the wisdom) of all states to leave the executive government in possession of the fullest controul, namely, the discipline and internal economy of the regular army. I am not now arguing the expediency or inexpediency of the limitation of the service: I am not talking of the merits or demerits of the project itself; I shall

come to that by-and-by: but I am at the outset protesting against the course which ministers have followed, which is such, that even if the measure itself were in my judgment unexceptionable, I should still object to the mode of its introduction. If limited service be ever so desirable an experiment, still why incorporate it in the Mutiny Act? Why make it the subject of legislative enactment at all? Why not pass the Mutiny Act according to its usual form, for the purpose of giving to Parliament the constitutional controul over the Crown and its Army, (which the Mutiny Act alone enables the Crown to raise and maintain) which it alone enables the Crown to pay, and under that controul, why may not the mode of raising and maintaining the army be safely left, as it has always hitherto been, to the executive government? If there be one political truth more undeniable than another, it is this, that no good has ever arisen from the interference of public assemblies with the military force of the state. Any attempt on the part of such assemblies to become popular with the army, is sure to lead to difficulty, and in the end, not seldom to confusion. The plain proof of this is, what we know to be historically true, and what we feel at this moment in our own instance, that every such act of interference must be accompanied with a donative or largess, as a sort of compensation for our intrusion; we have at this moment an estimate

on the table, of an additional charge of £300,000. annual expenditure—the first fruits, and, we may depend upon it, the very least part of what we may expect from this restless and meddling spirit of regulation; and this price we pay for liberty to confer what is represented as a benefit to the army—the change of the term of service. How, if some years hence, when this device shall have failed, and it shall become necessary to repeal it, how shall we find funds sufficient to accompany and atone for such an alteration? I think, Sir, we have seen symptoms that this truth is felt, and that its consequences extend beyond the army even, to the other services of the country. I grudge nothing that is given in bounty or in kindness; but I think the recommendation to such acts is best and most safely lodged with the Crown; and I am not willing to purchase, at an unnecessary expence, a right of interference which I think dangerous in its exercise.

The right honourable secretary (Mr. Windham) has contended, that in new-modelling the army according to his plan, Parliament will be doing no more than it has been accustomed to do at all times, but especially since the beginning of the present war. What, he asks, has been the business and occupation of the administration which preceded the present, but to frame measure after measure, and to propound law after law, for the augmentation and regulation of the military force

of the country?—Undoubtedly for the augmentation and regulation of that part of the military force, which is more immediately of the cognizance of Parliament; which cannot otherwise beraised than by Parliamentary measures; which is obtained from the country by different modifications of a compulsory process, none of which the Crown could possibly be enabled to originate or to apply, without the specific authority and detailed regulation of Parliament. The militia, the army of reserve, the additional force, are all of this description; constituting the defensive and limited force of the country, and that which may fairly be called the Parliamentary army, in contradistinction to that regular army of the Crown, which the Crown has at all times raised for itself, subject to the controul of the annual mutiny bill. All these measures therefore which the right honourable gentleman cites as precedents, are in fact directly in contrast with that which he now recommends. They were in fact enabling statutes in aid of the prerogative of the Crown; to give to the King a power of doing that which was necessary for the safety of the state, but which he could not do without the direct assistance of Parliament. This is, to limit or take from him a power which he already has, and to subject him to restrictions and disabilities, at once encroaching on the prerogative, and prejudicing the service of the country. The right

honourable gentleman opposite appears to doubt the truth of this construction. I ask, in what possible way, any statute can operate upon the prerogative of the Crown, except in one of these three;—either as giving some power, which the Crown had not before; or as explaining and confirming some doubtful or obsolete prerogative (as was the case in the bill for calling out the *levy-en-masse*), at the same time prescribing the mode of its exercise; or, thirdly, as directly limiting, restraining, or abolishing some power, which the Crown had hitherto been in the habit of exercising without dispute? In which of these three ways does the present measure operate? Does it give to the King, as a new power, the right of raising men for limited service; or has not the Crown always had and often exercised that right of limitation? Does it revive or explain any prerogative of doubtful construction? Does it even leave the power and prerogatives of the crown as it finds them? Has not the Crown at present, and has it not always had, in addition to the power of limiting the service, that of enlisting men for an indefinite time, subject to discharge at its own pleasure? And will not the clause now under consideration, if sanctioned by the legislature, take that power completely away? And for what object, and from what necessity is this alteration of the constitution projected? Cannot the experiment be tried as well by that authority

which has always hitherto exclusively regulated the terms of enlistment and the internal economy of the army; leaving with that authority the discretion of trying it at such times, and to such extent as may be most favourable to the experiment; (leaving the discretion also of suspending that trial, if its results should be found less beneficial than is expected)?—cannot, I say, this experiment be made in this way, with as much advantage, and with much less danger, than by pledging the whole legislature, not only to try it, but to abide the issue of that trial, without any alternative, and without the possibility of retreat? Does not the right honourable gentleman feel, that a regulation by the Crown would be equally effectual; while, if necessary, it could be recalled, without inconvenience? Does he not feel that a partial experiment in the first instance, will be amply sufficient to ascertain the merits of his plan; while, if unsuccessful, it might be abandoned or suspended, without difficulty? Does he not feel, that by making this great change, the work of the whole legislature, and the rule of the whole service, while he adds nothing to the facilities of experiment, he enhances incalculably the dangers of failure? And if this be the case, I do not ask what necessity, but what pretence, what decent apology can the King's Ministers offer, for laying the foundation of their plan for re-modelling the army, by dismembering the ancient prerogatives of the Crown?

These, Sir, are the grounds on which I should object to the mode in which the measure is brought under our discussion, even if from the measure itself I entertained sanguine expectations of good, instead of anticipating, as I confess I do, abundant evils and dangers. I object to establishing that as a system, which is confessedly to be tried as an experiment: I object to limiting the King's prerogative, for the undesirable purpose of putting the management of the recruiting and the detailed economy of the army into the hands of Parliament: I object to this, even if the experiment is to succeed and the system to become permanent: but if there be the remotest chance of failure, and of a necessity for recurring to the old system again, I object doubly to a pledge on the part of Parliament which must embarrass, beyond all calculation, the difficulty of a retreat.

But the right honourable gentleman and his friends are confident that the experiment cannot fail. One of his friends, indeed, the honourable colonel (Colonel Crawford) is much more sanguine than the right honourable gentleman himself, and rebukes the right honourable gentleman for having admitted that no immediate good was to be expected. The honourable colonel is of a very different opinion; and, with an estimate upon the table, of £330,000. annual expence, to be added at one stroke, immediately,—with the admission of the right honourable author of the pro-

ject, that he looks for no immediate advantage,—the honourable colonel has the boldness to contend that the advantages are immediate, and the inconveniences and burthens, if any, contingent and remote. I can hardly presume to decide between such great authorities, especially when I find them differing upon a point which they might be supposed to have settled in the course of their daily official communication. But I confess I am inclined in this, though perhaps in no other single instance, to adopt the opinion of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham), and to give him credit for the remoteness and precariousness of any possible advantage from his plan; while the paper on your table, containing as it does but one item of the expence to be incurred, is of itself a sufficient proof that some part of the burthen at least is to be felt immediately.

The right honourable gentleman very ingenuously told us, that he wished he had looked a little more narrowly into the calculations of expence: I wish he had—perhaps it was in some degree his duty to do so; and he would at least have been enabled to make good his argument against his honourable friend (Colonel Crawford) and to correct his inaccuracy in one instance, as he disclaims his sanguineness in another. But as to the powerful effects and inducements which belong to the limitation of the term of service,

there is no difference of opinion between the right honourable gentleman and his friend. It is to fill the ranks of the army, and to fill them with a better description of people. To this we presume to answer, that if limitation of service be so alluring, we have already tried the force of that allurement, by limiting not the term only, but the space; by inviting men to serve not for a few years only, but for those few years at home: the trial has been not wholly without success; far from it; but it has not had such striking and splendid success as (compared with the general term of enlistment) to prove, that the limitations are so all-powerful as the honourable gentleman represented them; and, above all, it has not, according to the honourable gentlemen themselves, produced a materially better description of men to the service. "Oh!—but," say the honourable gentlemen, "that is because you limited too much. The men that we want to get at, are those who wish to serve for a short time, but to serve abroad. You have no receptacle for men of that sort."—Well, then let us have one; with all my heart—but do not let us make up our minds to have no other sort: for, assuredly, however possible it may be that a reasonable proportion of such men may be found, it is a little too much to expect, that with an army to such an extent as we have at present, with an auxiliary force for home defence, in great part consisting

of volunteers (not one man of either of which establishments has required the inducement of this peculiar species of limitation),—it is, I think, a little too much to expect us to agree, that no other than this limitation can possibly be effectual. But I suppose it is amongst this bettermost description of men only, that the peculiar taste prevails. It is amongst them that we are to look for the persons who, according to the right honourable gentleman, like very little service, but choose to have that service foreign; like the man who, describing the sort of weather that best pleased him, declared that he would have "but little wind, but that little high." These are the persons whom the right honourable gentleman describes as likely to enter into the army for the sake of seeing the world; who, leaving their village Desdemonas at home, would embark for the West Indies, for the purpose of returning like so many Othellos, with a collection of stories to woo them with upon their return. Unquestionably this theory is a most delightful one; but I still have my doubts as to the extent, at least, of its possible operation. I cannot help thinking that that class of society, from which the ranks of our army have hitherto been chiefly supplied, must, even after the refinements of the right honourable gentleman, and all the lectures of the honourable colonel, on the necessary and practical operation of those refinements, still continue

to be the only very efficient source of the supply. Upon this class—I mean the lowest and labouring class of the community, the peasant and the inferior artisan—I suppose it is not contended that these fancies will work very powerfully: and as to mounting higher, in order that you may obtain a more numerous recruitment, it seems to me that that notion proceeds upon a false estimate of the relative proportions of the different classes of society. Society has often been compared to a pyramid; but I never yet heard that the point was nearest the earth, and the broadest surface at the top. If that were the true view of it, the honourable colonel would be right, and the higher you mounted, the larger superficies you would have to act upon; but if the lowest class be, as it is, infinitely the most extensive, I do not see that much would be gained by looking in preference to a higher level for your supply. I really believe, Sir, after all, that even when this system is in its fullest operation, the honourable colonel must still be content to draw his recruits from the plough, and from the fair, rather than from St. James's Street and the Royal Exchange.

But if, after all, we are wrong in this supposition; if there be such a race as the right honourable colonel supposes, of such peculiar and characteristic disposition; of such small, and at the same time delicate stomachs for military service; whom none of the modes of service hitherto

invented, have been able to satisfy: I am far from contending, that this variety of the military species may not be worth comprehending in any general plan of military establishment. By all means, let us have all that we can get; but do not let us, in attempting to catch this rare and nondescript creature, weave the meshes of our laws too close to answer any more useful or general purpose. But by all means let there be a class of this sort of service; let there be certain regiments raised with this particular term of enlistment; let the second battalions, as has been more than once suggested by the honourable general (Sir J. Pulteney), be appropriated to it. For this, no Act of Parliament is necessary, no new power need be given. The Crown may raise regiments, or appoint battalions for this purpose; and wherever these singular individuals are to be found, wherever the right honourable gentleman or the honourable colonel has heard of them, in whatever part of the country they are latitating and circumcursitating, there the King's recruiting writ may run and secure them, if they are to be had, for His Majesty's service. But where is the necessity of sacrificing every other chance to try this one, which may as well be tried without it? The right honourable gentleman meets this question with an argument the most singular and the most hardy that can well be conceived. He admits that the trial of this principle has been

made; and he admits, or rather contends, that its success has not been all that could be desired: "but," says he, "this failure has proceeded from its having been tried partially: make it the general rule of your service; recruit solely on this principle; leave nothing in competition with it; rely upon it alone, and be assured it will not fail you." Why, Sir, this might be very well, if the interests hazarded upon the issue of the experiment, were any thing less than the safety and existence of the empire; and I could understand the argument, if its application were to circumstances directly the reverse to those which are now under our consideration. If the principle of our service had hitherto been the limitation of the term; if the innovation now proposed were to enlist for a term indefinite; if this new method had been tried partially, and had not answered, I could perfectly understand any advocate for indefinite service, who should say, "No wonder this experiment has not yet succeeded; it has not had fair play: and so long as the limited service is suffered to bid in competition with it, its complete success cannot reasonably be expected." But it certainly is not an equally obvious truth, that the existence of the indefinite service affords a competition which must be fatal to the trial of the experiment of the limited term. I therefore cannot conceive a more unreasonable demand than that of the right honourable gentleman, that we should

consent to abolish a mode of enlistment, which, if not so alluring in theory, has been found effectual in practice, in order to try, with better chance of success, (for which we have nothing but his word,) an experiment which, having failed when we risked but little upon it, he contends we ought now to risk every thing upon it, and try it again.

Such being the only temptation which we have, according to the right honourable gentleman's acknowledgment, from the experience of our own country; we have naturally been desired to look abroad for the encouragement which was not to be found at home. Here, I think, however, the assertions of the honourable gentleman have been somewhat mitigated, and their tone of confidence somewhat lowered since the last discussion upon this subject. We no longer hear the general and sweeping declarations that all the great military powers have uniformly acted upon the system which the right honourable gentleman recommends; that we have stood alone among nations, and that it becomes us as soon as possible to conform to the general example. Ancient France is, I think, to-night, the solitary instance upon which the honourable gentlemen rely, to which indeed is added the example of Switzerland, with respect to the troops which she has been in the habit of hiring out to foreign powers. As to the Swiss, it requires, I think, but very few words to shew that the mode of raising troops

(however brave and valuable those troops may be), to be employed in the service of other powers, cannot fairly be cited as a precedent for an army upon which the defence of their native country is to depend. It is perfectly manifest that it might be utterly impossible to induce men to quit their country for life, especially men amongst whom the love of their country exists in so strong a degree; and as to the foreign power in whose pay they served, it is equally manifest that the acceptance of their service for a limited term, proves no predilection or partiality on the part of that power for such a species of service, inasmuch as the troops were to be had on no other. The example of ancient France has been as confidently relied upon by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham) as before; but the remarks of the honourable general behind me (Sir James Pulteney) have, I think, not a little diminished the force of the argument; and the illustrations of the honourable colonel (Crawford), who intended, I suppose, to sustain the proposition of his right honourable friend, have done what little was left undone by the honourable general, to demolish it. It is allowed on all hands, that faith must be kept with the soldier; that whatever period you fix for the termination of his engagement, at that period when it arrives, under whatever circumstances, under the pressure of whatever necessity, the soldier must have his discharge if he claims

it. It follows that no example can fairly be stated in favour of this plan, which does not shew not only that such engagements were made, but that they were kept sacred and inviolable; and one instance, even one solitary instance, of the violation of such an engagement on the part of any government which is held out to us as an object of imitation, ought, in my opinion, to operate not as a light to guide us, but as a beacon to alarm and warn us of our danger. How then stands the example of ancient France? It was stated on a former night by the honourable gentleman, and then sturdily denied, that the engagement of the French government with their soldiery had been violated at the beginning of the American war; that by an ordinance then published, the right of claiming discharges was suspended. To-night this fact has been admitted; but the admission was accompanied by the right honourable gentleman with a whimsical sort of triumph, because forsooth there was but this one instance to be found of such a violation of faith, and because this was a formal ordinance; as if the formality with which faith was broken in this instance, was a sort of proof how sacredly it had been kept before. But the honourable colonel has not been contented that the matter should rest there, and in order to satisfy us how unwillingly the government of France ever consented to the violation of its engagements, he has quoted the

indignant expressions of Marshal Saxe against officers who did not keep their engagements with the soldiery. Marshal Saxe's indignation, virtuous as it was, probably was not without cause. So here is another instance of the same breach of faith ; or rather, in all fair reasoning, a complete proof that, even in Marshal Saxe's time, it had grown up into a practice.

What then is the true result of this single example of ancient France ? Why, surely, that if in that extensive and populous country—a country at all times capable of affording a great proportion of its population to the profession of arms, the government has nevertheless found it impossible to keep its word with the soldiery; it is wild and hazardous in the extremest degree to act upon the supposition, that in a country comparatively limited in population, and that population called upon as it is to supply such an extent of manufactories, such a prodigious commercial marine, and a navy which absorbs alone such numbers as bear no small proportion to the armies of the continent, it would be possible in all instances to keep faith with the soldier, if unfortunately this clause should pass into a law. That if we foresee the smallest probability of being driven by any necessity to a violation of our engagement, we ought not to enter into it; that we ought not to run after the example of France in her policy, at the risk of being obliged to imitate her bad faith, is surely

not necessary to be argued in a British House of Commons.

Having succeeded no better in his history from abroad than in precedent at home, the right honourable gentleman has betaken himself, as usual, to analogy, and derives his analogies, as usual, from objects which at least amuse, if they do not enlighten. He admits in some degree the hazard of diminution to the army in the first instance, by keeping faith with the soldier; but this diminution is to be repaid with interest. He is not surprised that a colonel of a regiment, or the captain of a fine company of grenadiers, should feel loth to part with any number of his men at the expiration of a limited period. Just so, says the right honourable gentleman, it goes to one's heart to thin a fine grove of young and growing trees, till we reflect that, by taking some away, the remainder will grow finer and taller. The right honourable gentleman hardly needs be informed that this simile is not perfectly accurate, unless he means that the remaining grenadiers are to increase in height and corpulence in proportion as their comrades are removed. Still more unfortunate is the right honourable gentleman in the field of turnips into which he has wandered, though led there by an apparently happy ambiguity of words, which might have misled a less ingenious speculator. Does not the drill husbandman hoe his turnips? says the right honourable

gentleman; and what should prevent the drill serjeant in like manner from hoeing his battalion? The remaining turnips thrive and swell. But here again, unluckily, is the same mistake of size for number; and I cannot help fearing that the right honourable gentleman's system of husbandry will turn out nearly as unprofitable as that of the theorist, of whom the story is told in La Fontaine, who contrived to have nothing but the leaves of his turnips to carry to market. I very much fear that the right honourable gentleman, when, at the eve of any war, or in the middle of any campaign, he is fulfilling his engagements with the soldiers whose services are expired, will find that he is depriving his battalions of all that forms their substance, their solidity, and their strength, and that what he suffers to remain will be comparatively but the leaves of the turnips. To this apprehension, however, the right honourable gentleman opposes the confident persuasion that the men will not claim their discharge when due. The honourable colonel, to be sure, rather differs from his leader in this, as in other respects, and thinks that they will; but he thinks, that being discharged, they will do a good almost more than equivalent to their military service, by instigating others to take the places which they have quitted, and that their precept will countervail their example.

It would really be a great advantage to us in these debates, if the right honourable gentleman

and his friend would argue a little more precisely as to their own objects, and would agree upon the expectation which they would wish us to entertain; especially when they are so eager in rejecting the imputation of theory, and desire to be considered as reckoning upon nothing, which has not experience and example in its favour. But I am willing to take the honourable colonel's view of the subject as that which their own examples go nearest to establish. The Swiss, I presume, did return home at the expiration of their service; and that the prevailing habit in France, was to claim the discharge which became due, is fairly to be inferred, as well from the ordinance of 1788, as from what the honourable colonel has informed us, of Marshal Saxe's opinions many years before. What do we learn from the honourable colonel to have been Marshal Saxe's opinion upon this subject? He prescribes that faith shall be inviolably and invariably kept with the soldier; that the discharge when due shall be given to every man that claims it: and does he then reckon upon their not claiming it? No such thing; on the contrary, he follows up this recommendation with a proposition, which shews at once his persuasion that the discharges will be claimed, and his sense of the difficulty which will arise from granting them in time of war. And what is that proposition? The honourable colonel tells us that he suggests something

very like the present system of conscription in France. This, I confess, Sir, is the very thing which I have all along apprehended as the ultimate and most undesirable end of the right honourable gentleman's refinements and theories. The right honourable gentleman is offended by the word theories as applied to his system. He will permit me, at least, to class them with the meditations of Marshal Saxe: and as the Marshal was not ashamed to characterize them by the name of reveries, I shall, unless I am positively prohibited, take the liberty of applying the same term to the speculations of the right honourable gentleman. If that may not be, let us contrast the whimsical, fanciful, visionary reveries of this same speculative marshal, with the solid, practical judgment and profound military knowledge of the right honourable gentleman. Marshal Saxe did not reckon upon the re-enlistment; the right honourable gentleman does:—but I think the right honourable gentleman must at least agree with Marshal Saxe, that if the re-enlistments do not take place, and if good faith is kept as to the discharge, and if the mere prospect of that discharge has not been found sufficient here, as it was not found sufficient in France, to keep up the army by voluntary enlistment to the establishment requisite for war; the right honourable gentleman, I say, must see, as Marshal Saxe did, that some other means then must be resorted to; and

in the state of things which the right honourable gentleman's system will have produced, after it has been a few years in full operation, I should be glad to know what expedient for that purpose the right honourable gentleman himself has in view, short of conscription.

The right honourable gentleman has told us very truly, that there are but three ways, by which a military force can be raised; either by voluntary enrolment, or by compulsory, or by a mixture of the two. The compulsory enrolment he deprecates; *cuncta prius tentanda;* he would resort to it only in the last extremity; but my complaint against the right honourable gentleman's system is, that it tends directly and inevitably to bring this extremity upon us. It is against all experience that voluntary enrolment alone should suffice for all the military purposes of a great nation; there is no instance in the world in which it has been found sufficient. Recognizing this truth, we have in this country had recourse to a mixture of compulsory service; we have applied compulsion in its most mitigated form, and to home service only; for foreign service, we have recruited by voluntary enlistment, but finding the difficulty of filling our ranks by those means, we have not hitherto thought it wise to increase that difficulty, by multiplying three-fold the opportunities of quitting the service. This, the right honourable gentleman now

proposes to do. He proposes, in addition, to discourage, more or less,—in some instances he has suspended, and in some he has abandoned, the modes of compulsory enlistment. I ask him, if his theory should fail, what refuge has he left him but conscription? I say, that his attempt to square every thing to a theory, will lead to the necessity, at some time or other, of employing rude force; that his delicate and fastidious refinements will be the parent of a severe and undiscriminating necessity. It will be too late to retread our steps, when the hour of that necessity arrives. In God's name, let us not precipitate it; at least, let us not be persuaded to do so, by such arguments as we have heard this night? What argument in fact have we heard upon this subject, to solve the obvious difficulties which are in every body's mind, but more especially that difficulty which of itself is conclusive against the adoption of the right honourable gentleman's system, as a general system, and which I have reserved to this period of what I had to say, as that which distinguishes the case of this country from that of any other; and as that to which, unsatisfactory as the answers from the other side of the House have been upon every other point, they are so peculiarly and singularly unsatisfactory, as to provoke not remark only, but indignation! The House will readily apprehend that I allude to the colonial service. It is plain, that if

the example of all other countries, if the example of France, were as distinctly encouraging, as they have been shewn to be the reverse, still the extensive colonial possessions of this country, and the great proportion of our army, which it is necessary to employ in their defence, would alone be sufficient to discourage the adoption of the system by this country.

I will not take up the time of the House by pointing out the obvious difficulties and dangers arising from this system to the defence of our colonies;—but mark the answer, and the only answer which has been attempted to be given to them! The right honourable gentleman expressed a hope in which the honourable colonel faithfully followed, that the danger might not be quite so great as it appeared; and that before it actually occurred, means might be found to remedy it: and this is all! After so many years' debate, after so many months of official deliberation, the right honourable gentleman, in bringing forward a plan for the complete alteration of the established military system of the country, is no otherwise prepared to meet the objection which every man in this House, and out of this House; which every man who has either written, or spoken, or conversed, or thought upon the subject, has had uppermost in his mind, than by a vague and distant hope that at some time or other, somebody or other may, in some way or other, discover something or

other which shall, somehow or other, remedy some one or other of the manifold inconveniences and dangers which we all concur in apprehending! As to the right honourable gentleman himself, he washes his hands of it: it is not to him that we are to look for the solution of the difficulty: and with this explanation Parliament is to be satisfied! Sir, to such a plan as this, introduced in such a manner, supported by such arguments, fraught with such difficulties and dangers; a plan unnecessarily invading the prerogative of the Crown, and unadvisedly committing the faith and discretion of Parliament, I cannot but give my most decided and unqualified opposition. I do not thereby mean to pronounce any opinion against the expediency of trying the experiment of limited service. The Crown has already the power to try it. Let the right honourable gentleman—let the King's Ministers exercise their constitutional right to advise the Crown to make the trial, if they shall think fit: but let them not insist upon making Parliament a party to their experiment. No practical advantage is gained by our interference: and by abstaining from interposing, we shall at least avoid many practical disadvantages which may result from it.

Mr. Secretary Fox replied. The committee divided on bringing up the clause—

For the clause	254
Against it	125
Majority	129

MUTINY BILL.

JUNE 6th 1806.

Mr. Secretary Windham moved the order of the day for the third reading of the Mutiny Bill.

Mr. S. Bourne moved, as an amendment, that in the clause schedule it be inserted after the word "discharged," these words, "not until six months after the termination of any war in which this country may be engaged."

Lord H. Petty opposed the amendment. He contended that the plan of limited service, which was to continue for seven years, was a more simplified and effectual mode of making a necessary additional demand on the population of the country, than any other plan that had hitherto been brought forward. Gentlemen said that in a time of war we should not adopt any new theoretical experiment. He was well convinced, however, that a time of war and danger was not a time in which we should give way to any feelings of fear. This reminded him of an anecdote told of a very

brave man, who being asked "how he would act if he were at the top of Salisbury steeple?" replied, "Just in the same manner as if I were on Salisbury plain." And there could be no doubt that in time of danger true courage consisted in acting with steadiness.

Mr. Canning—I rise, Sir, not only for the purpose of replying to the noble lord who spoke last, but of recapitulating as shortly as I can the leading arguments by which this measure has been opposed, and which remain at this period of the discussion, wholly unanswered; of reminding the House of the state in which the question now stands; and of conjuring them to avail themselves of this last opportunity, which is afforded them by the amendment of my honourable friend (Mr. S. Bourne), if not to save the regular army of the country altogether from the peril of the projected innovation, at least to disarm that innovation of part of the mischief with which it threatens to be attended.

The precise object of the amendment is to prevent the operation of the discharges during war: to prevent, if possible, the dismemberment or dissolution of the British army, at periods when the very safety of the country may depend upon its being kept together. The noble lord who spoke last has either misunderstood or dexterously misstated the purport of this amendment. He

has argued against it as if its avowed object had been to prevent the passing of this bill during the war; and he has told us that, in his opinion, the time of danger is the properest time for the display of additional courage and magnanimity. The noble lord has illustrated his proposition (according to the custom of the Treasury bench, when argument is wanting,) by a story, the authenticity of which it is not necessary to question, of some wise and gallant individual, who appears to have obtained a great share of the noble lord's admiration, by replying to a person who asked him "what he would do if he were on the top of Salisbury steeple? that he would do on Salisbury steeple precisely the same thing that he would do on Salisbury plain." This reply the noble lord considers as fraught with wisdom and magnanimity, and as affording a brilliant example to Parliament and to the country. In point of wisdom, perhaps, it is not easy to decide between the person who asked the question and him who answered it. It may be matter of surprise, indeed, that the answerer did not reply to the querist by another query, namely, "Why, in God's name he should go to the top of the steeple at all?" What it was that he was to do when he got there, the noble lord has not condescended to inform us, nor would it, perhaps, be becoming to suggest; but among the few functions which a man in that situation could possibly perform,

there does not appear to be any one which is peculiarly worthy of the imitation or attention of the House, or which might not have been performed with as much advantage and satisfaction in a horizontal direction upon the plain as in a perpendicular one from the steeple. But however splendid this individual achievement may have been in the noble lord's opinion, he must see that as an illustration it is not good for much, unless it be the noble lord's intention to contend, not only that we ought to behave with steadiness and courage in time of actual danger, but that it is expedient to create dangers, and to place ourselves in situations of peril, purely for the sake of exhibiting our magnanimity. Such would be the failure of the noble lord's argument, even if applied to the question as he has argued it, of commencing this system in time of war; but the object of the amendment being, as has been stated, to suspend the operation of the system during future wars, it would be difficult to make out any claim of magnanimity on our part for inflicting on posterity evils which we do not encounter ourselves. What objection can reasonably be offered to this amendment, we are yet to learn. To the principle of it the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham) has subscribed, when he admitted an extension of three years' service in the case of discharges becoming claimable during war. This admission is of itself sufficient to acknowledge

the necessity, but it is not sufficient to remedy it. On the other hand, it breaks in upon the certainty and definiteness in the term of service, which the right honourable gentleman has urged as the main advantage of his whole system; it breaks in upon it sufficiently to destroy the inducement arising from it, at the same time that it does not meet the evil, the apprehension of which alone can justify any such infraction. Quitting, however, the narrower ground of the amendment immediately before us, the noble lord has gone into the more general topics upon the subject of the bill, but I think, without being fortunate enough to supply that degree of argument and conviction which has been so much desiderated from the other side of the House. One point, however, he has entirely omitted, upon which it would have been particularly desirable, and from that noble lord it might perhaps have been reasonably expected, that we should derive some information, I mean the question of expence. The right honourable gentleman, the author of the bill, expressed, on a former night, a wish that he had found leisure to look over the calculations: a wish in which the House and the country may have good reason to join. My honourable and learned friend near me (Mr. Perceval) and my noble friend (Lord Castlereagh,) upon this acknowledgment, that Ministers had not turned their attention to the subject, ventured to suggest with all becoming deference, such rough and

imperfect estimates on this head as the few data in possession of the House, and the unenlightened diligence of men out of office could furnish. But these suggestions were so ill received, so confidently scouted, as full of error and exaggeration, that it became impossible not to suppose, that though the right honourable gentleman whose immediate business it was to bring in the bill, had not had leisure to look into this material part of it, some other of His Majesty's Ministers had thought it their duty to take the task off his hands; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, it was natural to look to him for information upon a subject not wholly unconnected with his department. Upon this subject, however, the noble lord has not said one word; and the House is now called upon to pass a bill which obviously and notoriously entails a vast expence upon the country, without any official estimate, without any ministerial statement, without the smallest information by which to form a calculation, or even a conjecture as to the amount of the burden which they are imposing. All that we know is, that £330,000 a-year (for of so much we have an estimate) is a part only, and a small part of the whole amount. With respect to the remainder, the only intelligence that we have been able to obtain is, that the expence will not be so great as it was estimated by my noble friend, namely, about two millions a-year.

There is another main objection to the whole of this plan, which the right honourable gentleman who introduced it has never condescended to answer, but which the noble lord and others who preceded him in this debate, have this night attempted to remove. I refer to the difficulties attending the colonial service. The noble lord instances the practice of the East-India Company, who engaged their recruits for limited service (a term of five years), and who, as the noble lord avers, never in any instance broke faith with them in India, and suffered no inconvenience from adhering to their engagements. I will not enter into the question of good faith; the testimony on that point is certainly not unanimous. It is sufficient to remark that, whether from feeling any inconvenience or not, the East-India Company have some years since, at the suggestion of Lord Cornwallis, wholly abandoned that mode of enlistment; that there remains, I believe, but one battalion whose service is upon that tenure; and that with the exception of that battalion, all the troops now serving in the East Indies are enlisted for an indefinite term. It may be added, that the whole of the troops so engaged for limited service never amounted, at any one time, to five thousand men; a very insufficient precedent for placing the whole British army on that footing, and a precedent which we ought surely to have some better reason to induce us to adopt, than the fact that those

who formerly practised it have now finally abandoned it.

Finding little support from the practice of past times in the East Indies, the next resource is to look for consolation in what futurity is to bring about for us in the West. And here, Sir, agreeing, as I most cordially do, in the opinions and feelings of my honourable friend on the bench below me (Mr. Wilberforce), respecting the great question of the abolition of the Slave Trade, I really cannot help lamenting, and I am sure I say it with every possible respect to him, that his wishes upon this subject should so far have warped his judgment, as to lead him to believe that he saw in the speedy abolition of the Slave Trade a safe and certain solution of all the difficulties of colonial service. The Slave Trade once abolished, my honourable friend tells us, the whole system of negro slavery will be so mitigated and improved, that the internal defence of the islands may be intrusted in a great measure to their own labouring population. I can truly say, Sir, that I would not willingly damp my honourable friend's ardour in this great cause, nor would I abate a jot of the sanguineness of his expectations, if sanguine expectation were of itself a security for speedy accomplishment. But after twenty years of annually repeated failure, I do not think that one can rationally look with so much confidence to immediate success. God forbid that this consi-

deration should discourage my honourable friend, or slacken his exertions for the attainment of his object! but I cannot agree with him in reckoning upon that object as already attained, so confidently as to begin already to anticipate its consequences, still less to consider them as immediate and available. The warm heart and eager imagination of my honourable friend must have been cruelly imposed upon, if he has been persuaded to consider the abolition of the Slave Trade as linked with the measure now before the House; and though I should be glad to account, from so amiable a motive, for the support which he has (otherwise I think unaccountably) given it, I am afraid that it is but too easy at once to subvert and destroy the very foundation of the supposed connection between the two measures, by shewing him that this clause for limitation of service is precisely that which would make the use of a negro force, to any considerable extent, unavailable: even if by the abolition of the Slave Trade and the consequent amelioration of the situation of the negroes, it should have become in other respects safe and desirable so to employ them. Nay, I am much mistaken if this alteration of the term of service does not strike at the root of the establishment of black corps, even as far as they at present exist. It certainly would do so if the negroes were in that state of improvement which my honourable friend anticipates. I request my honourable friend to

look at the clause in which the oath to be taken by all soldiers is prescribed; he will see that there is no exception or qualification whatever; and he will see a negro enlisted under this Mutiny Act could claim his discharge at the end of seven years.

Now, whatever confidence my honourable friend may have in the dispositions that are to grow out of their improved situation hereafter, I do not apprehend that it can be even his project to fill the islands with disbanded negroes, who have been seven years practising the use of arms. Possibly this difficulty may not apply to the present moment, when the corps are composed of purchased slaves, and, in a great measure, I am afraid, of slaves recently imported from Africa; but if ever the moment arrives which my honourable friend so fondly anticipates, when the negro will have become enough of a citizen to be (in his apprehension) safely trusted as a soldier, this improved condition, combined with this improved Mutiny Act, must necessarily lead to the consequences which I have mentioned. But after all, can any thing be more wild and visionary than to refer us to the distant and doubtful consequences of the success of a measure which has failed for twenty years, for the only solution which Ministers, after all their deliberation, are at last prepared to give of a difficulty of their own creating? Better almost would it have been to have confined themselves within the safer, because un-

meaning, and therefore unanswerable, assertion of the right honourable gentleman on a former night, that he had no doubt something would be discovered to remedy the inconvenience, though he did not pretend to be the person to discover it! Such and so insufficient being the answers which are at last provided for the objections which have been urged agaist the measure in this stage, the noble lord indulges himself in a triumph over other supposed objections, which, because they have not been re-stated this night, he thinks himself at liberty to consider as altogether abandoned. "We hear no more," says the noble lord, "of the alarm which was taken early in this discussion, and which was attempted to be spread throughout the country of the too great military force which was to be put at the disposal of the Crown, to the danger of the liberties of the country; this doctrine has now given place to another of a different sort, and wholly inconsistent with it; we are now told of the encroachment upon the prerogative of that Crown whose extended power before was to fill us with apprehension."—Begging the noble lord's pardon, there is no such inconsistency in these arguments as he is pleased to impute to them; nor is that one of them which has not been stated to-night, therefore to be considered as abandoned. It has not been stated to-night, simply because it does not apply to the parti-

cular point now under discussion. It was urged at the outset of these discussions as applying to the general scope and tendency of the right honourable gentleman's whole plan, of which the measure now before us is a part: of which plan, considered as a whole, the tendency was argued, and I think demonstrated, to be the discouragement and destruction of all those species of military force, which it has been the practice and the policy of this country to employ for home-defence; and to which, consistently with the spirit of the constitution, its internal defence may best be intrusted. It was urged, and I think unanswerably, that the tendency of the right honourable gentleman's plan (if not its avowed object) was to discourage the volunteers; to undermine, and finally overturn the militia establishments; to abolish and proscribe every mode of raising from the bosom of the country any sort of force, which Parliament has hitherto been in the habit of raising; and it was contended that the inevitable consequence (as it was the undisguised desire) of the projector of this plan, was to raise and maintain a huge unbalanced regular army. It was affirmed (and can the noble lord deny it?) that against such an army no free state had long maintained its freedom; and it was contended, not that our military exertions ought therefore to be less, but that our military force ought to continue to preserve that charac-

ter of variety, which is so odious in the eyes of the right honourable gentleman, but which it cannot lose without a departure from the practice and the principles of the constitution. In this general objection to the right honourable gentleman's whole theory of military improvement (which I am not sorry to have an opportunity of re-stating and re-affirming), what is there inconsistent with the objection stated to this particular measure, that it takes the management of the King's army out of the hands of the King; because we feel a jealousy and apprehension of the project of having nothing but a regular army in the country, does it therefore follow, that we are not to disapprove of innovations, as dangerous as unnecessary, in the constitution of that army? I would leave the King's authority over the regular army entire as I find it; but I would not trust the whole defence of the country, internal as well as external, to that army alone. Is there anything contradictory in this statement? Leave us our constitutional force, and there is no danger from the regular army. But it is a poor device first to break down every other force upon which the country has relied, and to which the constitution is partial, and then to think we can remedy the inconvenience by taking the government of the regular army into our own hands. Equally unfounded is that part of the noble lord's statement in which he imputes as an inconsistency and absurdity to those who have agreed

with him, with his right honourable friend, and with all mankind, in the necessity of keeping up, under the present circumstances of the world, large military establishments, that they now complain of the vast drain and demand upon the population of the country; and that after concurring in the wish that the country should be militarized as much as possible, they now oppose the means best calculated to produce that effect. The whole of this statement proceeds upon a mistake of one argument, and an assumption of another. I never heard it stated, I am sure I never stated it, as a matter of complaint, or even of regret, that there was so large a drain and demand for military service upon the population of the country. I have stated it, and I have heard it stated, as a matter of fact; and as affording a sufficient answer to those who, because the regular army could not be augmented on the sudden to the proportion which they represent as necessary, have thought themselves therefore entitled to despond as to the military means, or to discourage the military spirit of the country. And as to opposing the measures by which those military means were to be concerted, and that military spirit to be encouraged and extended, the justice of that imputation depends upon the assumption of the fact, that the measures devised by the right honourable gentleman, are in truth the best calculated for that purpose, and upon the further assumption

of our acknowledgment that they are so. We acknowledge no such thing: we oppose the right honourable gentleman's plans, because we think them not the best calculated for this purpose; because we differ from him, as to his opinion that all the other military establishments of the country would be wisely and cheaply sacrificed to procure a comparatively small numerical increase of the regular army; because we think directly the contrary; because, desirable as the augmentation, to any amount you please, of the regular army may be, we would rather acquiesce in that augmentation being more limited or more slow, than sacrifice at once all the other military establishments of the country for the purpose of hastening and extending it. In this difference of opinion I will admit for a moment that the right honourable gentleman may be right, and we wrong; but it requires arguments, and better than any I have yet heard, to prove us so; and till that has been proved, it cannot be asserted with truth, that we are wilfully opposing that which we have acknowledged to be best calculated to obtain our object.

And this, Sir, leads me unavoidably to the recollection of the opinions expressed on a former night by the right honourable gentleman opposite me (Mr. Fox), respecting the general state of our regular force, and the expediency and necessity of maintaining and

extending it as much as possible: opinions, which, coming from a person of his pre-eminence both in talents and situation; from one whom it is impossible to consider as any other than the leading Minister of the country, could not but excite the most serious attention and solicitude. I am ready to allow, that with much, indeed with most, of what the right honourable gentleman has said on that occasion, I cordially agree; indeed upon much of it there could be no difference of opinion. He told us that with an extensive and efficient regular army, an army not only in as perfect a state of discipline and military spirit as he admits our present army to be, but augmented to such an extent as to bear nearly the same proportion to the armies of the other powers of Europe, and particularly of France, as subsisted between our army and theirs in those periods of our military history to which we refer with most exultation, the wars of King William and Queen Anne; he told us that, with such an army, he would engage to maintain the interests and honour of the country; that with such an army, he would continue to vindicate our rank among the nations of the world. And he added most justly, and if with justice, I need not say, with that commanding eloquence with which he is always able to enforce any proposition (but which was perhaps hardly necessary to enforce this, in which there is so general a concurrence)

that it was by maintaining our rank among nations, and our connection with the other nations of Europe alone, and not by any fanciful and selfish system of separate interest and insulated policy, that we could ultimately hope to maintain even our own independent existence. All this, Sir, I heard with admiration, and still recollect with satisfaction. But that which was wanting to complete my satisfaction, that which I still feel to be wanting, and which I wish I could hear the right honourable gentleman this night supply, is the other alternative. "Give me a great army," says the right honourable gentleman, "such as I describe and require, and I will answer for the honour, and interests of the country." But how, if after all our endeavours, if after resorting to every practicable plan for increasing the regular army,—how if it should so happen, that physical causes, that the insurmountable difficulties arising from a limited population, combined with the demands of other concurrent and indispensable services, should prevent us from gratifying the right honourable gentleman with an army to the full extent and amount which he requires? How are we then to understand the right honourable gentleman? Are we then to understand his pledge as retracted? Are we to understand that the right honourable gentleman puts wholly out of the account, in the estimate of our relative strength and power as compared with those of the enemy, all

those circumstances in which our superiority is not only unrivalled, but unquestioned; and despairs of the safety of the country, unless we can acquire a similar superiority also, in respect to that species of power which the physical means of our enemy enable them to maintain upon a scale which it is impossible for us to equal? If indeed the right honourable gentleman had been applying his argument to that system of insular policy which he very properly abjures, and confining his views, as he very properly disdained to do, to the mere question of domestic security, I admit that the argument would be a sound one; undoubtedly no nation can be great or respected abroad, which is not confident of its safety at home; but of this there is now I trust no question. I trust that the sufficiency of our means, and provision for home defence, is no longer matter of anxiety. Nor did the right honourable gentleman, to do him justice, consider it in that point of view. But if the right honourable gentleman meant to say, that unless we, with our fourteen or fifteen millions of population can, after providing amply for our home defence; after manning a navy such as the world never saw before; after garrisoning all our distant colonial possessions,—maintaining at the same time the manufactures and industry of the country; if he means that, unless under all those circumstances, and after all these deductions, we can furnish invading and conquering armies, capable of equal-

ling those which the undivided efforts of the enemy have raised from a population more than double in number; that unless we can do this, we must be content to abdicate our station, and sacrifice our honour; if this be the right honourable gentleman's meaning, I confess I do not know how sufficiently to express my regret at hearing such sentiments from the mouth of a British Minister at a moment like the present. I regret it the more, because these sentiments agree too much with those which the whole French school of politicians have for the last ten years been labouring to inculcate. The notion that territory and population form the only two legitimate bases of national power; that it is upon them alone that a nation can either establish its own intrinsic merit, or found a claim to respect and influence among its neighbours; this notion it has undoubtedly suited the views of France to propagate; but I do not think that it is becoming or safe for the Government of this country to adopt it. If this notion be true, and is received by us as true, the contest is at an end:—France is universally predominant, and we must bound our wishes to humble safety. But if, as I contend (and as I hope I should do the right honourable gentleman injustice if I did not believe him to be ready to contend with me), the power of this country is not the less firm, nor its means of exertion the less effectual, nor its claim to the high rank which it has hitherto held,

the less legitimate, because they are founded on other bases than the mere extent of its soil and the number of its inhabitants: if its naval pre-eminence, if its commercial enterprize, if its industry and wealth are allowed to weigh any thing in the scale, I must protest against the doctrine which goes to invalidate all these titles, and to place the question of its greatness upon the single point of the recruitment of its regular army. But even if we could admit the argument to be true, with what fairness is it applied to the discussions upon the bill now before us? We who disagree with the right honourable gentleman in considering the regular army as the single vital principle of our existence as a nation, do yet agree with him as to the importance, the expediency, and the necessity of augmenting the regular army as much as possible: and if we oppose this measure, which the right honourable gentleman thinks not only the best, but the only one that can be resorted to for that purpose, it is not because we undervalue his object, but because we doubt of the efficacy of his means.

It remains only to consider the nature of those supposed advantages belonging to this measure, upon which its advocates so confidently rely for the improvement and increase of the army. The noble lord (Lord H. Petty) says, that desertions will be altogether done away by the limitation of the term of service. I answer from the fact, that

by far the greater part of the desertions now are from new levies, and from limited service. The right honourable gentleman has argued (and many gentlemen, both on this and on a former night, have dwelt upon that argument with great fondness), that there is something in this measure calculated to change greatly for the better the character of the British army. I had never heard before that the character of the British army required to be changed. I had thought that in every quality that constitutes a soldier, in bravery, in discipline, in enterprize, and in patience under privations, the British army had already acquired a character such as no service in Europe could surpass. It is admitted on all hands that such is the character of the present army: but it is imagined, I know not on what ground, either that in all those particulars there is a necessity for improvement, or that those who are henceforth to be enlisted would degenerate from the example of their fellows, unless some additional stimulus were applied to them.

A learned lord, whom we have heard this night for the second time in this House (the Lord Advocate of Scotland), and whom, I am sure, we shall always hear with pleasure, has endeavoured to illustrate this point by a transaction in his own country, respecting the colliers and miners, whose condition was changed some years ago from that of servitude for life to voluntary labour. Many

persons, he says, were alarmed at the trial of this experiment; and thought that if the chains of these poor people were broken, and they were suffered to emerge from the bowels of the earth, with liberty to return there or not as they pleased, none of them would in fact return, and that the coal-pits and the mines would remain unwrought for the future. This gloomy expectation, however, was disappointed: the emancipated colliers and miners returned, not only by free choice to the labour from which they had been set free, but with added industry and increased good-will to their employers. Does not the learned lord perceive, that this fact, however interesting as a history (which I willingly admit it to be), yet halts a little as a comparison? The boon bestowed upon the colliers and miners was, if I mistake him not, for their own immediate use and enjoyment: but if had it been resolved only that all future colliers and miners should enjoy these immunities and privileges, but that the existing generation should go on upon the old system of indefinite servitude, does he think there would have been any thing in that arrangement to awaken the gratitude, to stimulate the industry, and to improve the character of the present collier and miner? The learned lord, however, vouches for his countrymen in general, that this alteration in the term of service will operate upon their feelings to such a degree, that bounty

will no longer be necessary to induce enlistment. I receive with all possible readiness, and give implicit credit to whatever the learned lord affirms in favour of a country to which I bear so high a respect, and of which he himself is so bright an ornament. But will the learned lord allow me to remind him that this, though admirable in itself, appears to clash a little with another character which he gave of his countrymen upon a recent occasion? In the debate upon the repeal of the Defence Bill, the learned lord told us that nothing could be more absurd than to expect to get men in Scotland for a less bounty than had hitherto been given. "My countrymen," said he, "are a sagacious people," and it was presently seen, that for the reduced bounty of twelve guineas, not a man could be obtained. Now he tells us that his countrymen are a patriotic people; and that for a limited service they will engage without any bounty at all. But the other was limited service too; and therefore, though I do not question either the sagacity or the patriotism of the learned lord's countrymen, yet, while I cannot help regretting that their patriotism was not called in to correct their sagacity in the former instance, I cannot help apprehending that their sagacity may possibly interfere with the exercise of their patriotism in the present instance. My honourable friend below me (Mr. Wilberforce), has taken this matter upon a yet higher tone, and has

poured forth abundant eloquence upon the topic of the union of character between the soldiers and citizens; of the incompatibility of indefinite military service with a free civil constitution; and of the necessity of making the soldiers partakers as far as possible, and at all events reversionary heirs of that liberty which they are employed to defend. My honourable friend has told us, that all history exhibits the important truth, that the armies of free countries have uniformly been victorious; that they have been so, because the armies themselves have been free. The theory is so beautiful, that we cannot but lament that it should want the recommendation of truth. I forget who it is that says, that men read history with such different eyes, and retain such different impressions of it, that you would hardly think it possible that they could have been reading the same thing. For my part, when I endeavour to recollect the most splendid and striking examples of conquest and military glory of the ancient or the modern world, I find it difficult to prevent the names of Philip of Macedon and of his son, the name of Julius Cæsar, the name of the King of Prussia, and still more that of Buonaparte, from occurring to me; and I find myself at a loss to attribute any part of their successes to the enthusiasm of liberty, or to the energy of a constitutional spirit. I am far from wishing to disparage the suggestions of my honourable friend, but I

am anxious that a serious and most important question should be placed in its true light, and stripped of the glare of popular fallacy. But if I am able to hear this argument with complacency, at the same time that I deny its force, I cannot suppress my astonishment and admiration at the patient silence of the right honourable secretary (Mr. Windham). The right honourable gentleman has heard, not to-night only, but on former nights, such doctrines respecting the mixture of the military and civil character, as I should have thought would have made him start from his seat to vindicate the very first principles of his system. If there were one thing which he laboured more than another in that memorable speech, in which he poured forth his whole soul, the accumulation of many years' meditation upon these subjects, it was the distinctness and inviolable separation of the soldier from the citizen. The soldier he described as utterly segregated and set apart from the population in which he lived; as belonging to a world of his own, and not looking beyond the limits of it; exempt from toiling for his own subsistence; but devoting himself to habits of life, to discipline, and laws, and institutions of peculiar strictness and severity, neither partaking in the solicitudes, nor enjoying the immunities of civil life. So far from proposing to approximate the soldier to the

citizen, he thought (as the House well remembers) that the occasional assumption of the military title, and the military garb, by the volunteers, who were still irretrievably citizens, had affected the soldiers' character with a contamination which it would be difficult to remove. And yet the right honourable gentleman has now, for two nights, sat by and heard his measure supported, on the ground that it tends distinctly and directly to produce the very effect which he has so strenuously disclaimed and deprecated. He heard on a former night an honourable and distinguished member from Ireland (Mr. Grattan) descant in a strain of learned and splendid declamation on the necessary union of the two characters, which he wishes to keep asunder. He heard the same night the honourable and learned gentleman near him (the Solicitor General) deduce from the works of Mr. Justice Blackstone an argument, that the separation of the soldiery from the mass of His Majesty's subjects, was wholly incompatible with our free constitution. He has heard the same argument to-night from the noble lord near him (Lord H. Petty), from the learned lord (the Lord Advocate), and from my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce). He has heard it asserted as the main principle and chief praise of his measure, that it promotes and secures this contaminating union; and, to my astonishment,

he has accepted in silence the panegyrics which his feelings must have disavowed. I can excuse him for having disdained to answer the attacks of his opponents, but I am surprised that he should not have vindicated himself from the support of his friends.

Upon the whole, Sir, nothing has been urged in the debate of this night to change the opinion which I had formed upon this measure. The advantages held out from it still appear to me to be visionary and theoretical; the practical inconveniences and dangers manifest and undenied; the remedies of those dangers uncertain and precarious, and, by the avowal of the very author of the measure, rather to be hoped for than confidently expected. The stake put to hazard is nothing less than the whole regular army, that army upon which (exclusively, as the right honourable gentlemen contend) the security of the empire is to rest. And all this at a moment like the present! The Bill, I am afraid, is gone too far to admit of opposition in the whole, or amendment in many parts. One part only of one danger, it is yet in our power to guard against. The amendment proposed by my honourable friend affords us this opportunity. It is the last twig at which we can catch before we are precipitated into all the danger which awaits us. It is too late for the House to decide against measures which hazard the army altogether; but it is

yet in their power to take a security for its being kept together, at least in time of war.

The House divided, when there appeared

For the Amendment	103
Against it -	195
Majority against it	92

The Bill was then passed.

THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS' SPEECH.

DECEMBER 19th, 1806.

The 15th of December was the day appointed for the meeting of the New Parliament, which was opened by commission. On the 19th the Lord Chancellor and other commissioners attended in the House of Lords. The royal commission was then read, authorizing the Peers therein named to open the Parliament. After which the Lord Chancellor, by command of His Majesty, delivered a speech to both Houses.

The Speaker, on his return to the House of Commons, reported, that the House had been at the House of Peers, at the desire of the Lords Commissioners, appointed under the great seal, for opening and holding this present Parliament; and that the Lord High Chancellor, being one of the said commissioners, made a speech to both Houses of

Parliament, of which, to prevent mistakes, he had obtained a copy. He then proceeded to read the speech. After the Speaker had finished reading it,

The Honourable William Lamb (son of Lord Viscount Melbourne) moved the following address, which was an echo of the sentiments contained in the Lords Commissioners' Speech :—

That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House, for the most gracious speech which the Lords Commissioners have read to us by His Majesty's command; to assure His Majesty, that his faithful Commons embrace, with the utmost satisfaction, the first opportunity of humbly testifying to His Majesty those sentiments of duty and attachment to His Majesty's person and government, and of zeal for the honour of his crown, and the interests of his dominions, which will uniformly direct all their proceedings. To offer to His Majesty our humble thanks for having directed to be laid before us copies of the papers which have been exchanged in the course of the late negociation with France, which we will not fail to take into our most serious consideration. To express to His Majesty our firm conviction, that a general and permanent tranquillity can only be established on terms consistent with the honour of His Majesty's crown, with the interests of his loyal people, and with that inviolable good faith towards His Majesty's allies, by which the conduct of this country has always been distinguished. That we deeply and sincerely regret, that His Majesty's benevolent endeavours to obtain this desirable end should

have been disappointed, and that, in the same moment, a fresh war should have been kindled in Europe, the progress of which has been attended with the most calamitous events. That we learn, with regret, that no adequate satisfaction had been offered to His Majesty by Prussia for those aggressions which had placed the two countries in a state of mutual hostility; but that we sincerely applaud His Majesty's generous resolution to adopt such measures as might be best calculated to unite the councils and interests of the two Powers against the common enemy. That we observe, with sincere pleasure, that, in the midst of the disastrous events which have followed, and under the most trying circumstances, the good faith of His Majesty's allies has remained unshaken; that the conduct of the King of Sweden has been distinguished by the most honourable firmness; and that the happiest union continues to subsist between His Majesty and the Emperor of Russia. That we trust these reciprocal proofs of good faith will have the happy effect of strengthening and confirming an alliance which affords the best remaining hope of safety for the continent of Europe. That, whilst we acknowledge with gratitude, the gracious expressions of concern with which His Majesty observes the necessity of adding to the public burthens, and sincerely partake in the same sentiment, we humbly beg leave to assure His Majesty, that we will, upon all occasions, carefully keep in view the wishes which His Majesty's paternal goodness has induced His Majesty to express, of combining all practicable economy with those efforts which it is necessary to make against the

formidable and increasing power of the enemy. That we are impressed with the deepest sorrow at the long series of misfortune which has afflicted the continent of Europe, and which could not fail to affect, in some degree, many important interests of this country; but that we observe, with the truest pleasure, that the great sources of our national prosperity have remained unimpaired. That we feel the utmost confidence, that, under every difficulty, His Majesty will still have the satisfaction of witnessing an increasing energy and firmness on the part of his people; and that the valour and discipline of His Majesty's fleets and armies will continue to be displayed with the same undiminished lustre which has distinguished them during the whole of the present contest. That, with these advantages, and with an humble but firm reliance on the protection and support of Divine Providence, we are prepared to meet all the exigencies of the present crisis, and to second, to the utmost of our power, the paternal efforts of His Majesty, to secure the honour and independence of the British crown, and the prosperity and freedom of his brave and affectionate people.

Mr. John Smith seconded the address.

Mr. Canning* declared that he never rose with more lively sensations of anxiety than on the present occasion, both because he felt the unparalleled importance of the crisis, and the duty which bound him, in common with every member of the House, and every subject of the realm, to state his real opinion of the situation of our affairs, and of the best means which remained for their

extrication from the peril in which they were involved. But in doing this, the greatest difficulty was to avoid that which, above all other things, he was most solicitous to avoid; namely, to appear to damp the spirits of the country at a period when it was so necessary that firmness and confidence should prevail. He begged, therefore, that the House would be candid enough to believe him, when he declared, that he entertained a perfect and sincere confidence—a confidence founded not on rashness, but on the most mature reflection—a confidence founded on the experience of the past, on the review of the present, and on the anticipation of the future—that there existed in this country resources amply sufficient to meet and brave all the difficult struggles, and to avert all the impending dangers with which we could possibly be threatened. He trusted, that all which it might be necessary for him to say in the course of the observations which he should take the liberty of submitting to the House, might be considered with a reference to this declaration. But, with whatever confidence he felt himself justified in looking to the resources of the country, he also felt how incumbent it was on him, and on the House, to look seriously to the situation of the country; to examine, to deliberate, and to determine, whether all that had passed in the conduct of the state had been without error, or whether some reflections on what had been done, might not have a favourable influence on what was still to do. Assuredly it was in the power of any man, who had turned his attention more particularly to public affairs, even of such an humble individual as himself, to throw

out suggestions to Government without the slightest intention of thwarting it, or without the most remote feeling to the members of which it was composed. For many of those members he professed to entertain the highest consideration. Were it possible that it should enter into the imagination of any man, at such a crisis as the present, to set himself to a perverse opposition to Government, he must be thought not only insensible to public affairs as they then stood, but to all that had passed under a late administration; the history of the fifteen last years of which, sufficiently shewed that was not the course of opposition that ought to be pursued, or that was likely to produce beneficial effects; he alluded to the conduct during the last war, of the gentlemen who then sat on the bench which he and his friends now occupied.

Both the honourable proposer and the honourable seconder of the address (and here he begged leave to remark the distinguished performance at the present time, and the flattering promise for the future, which their speeches afforded) dwelt on the necessity of unanimity. Unquestionably the situation of the country was calculated to produce unanimity. But of unanimity there were different degrees. There was a description of unanimity which blinded every man's judgment to every thing that was wrong, and thus made him the passive instrument of any ministry. But there was another and a superior species, the professor of which, while he insisted on his right to investigate measures, and consider results, would yet give his cordial support to the Government, in spite of the errors to which he would not allow himself to

be wilfully blind. If at any time this latter course of proceeding was justifiable, when the judgment of every man who possessed any judgment ought to be exercised, it was the present. The situation of the country divided itself into two considerations—our relative situation to the world, and our internal situation. With regard to the former it was impossible that any thing more just or more eloquent could be said upon it, than what had been said by the honourable mover of the address. With regard to the latter, it afforded matter for deep meditation.

A new Parliament had been assembled, and they were now for the first time about to review the transactions of an administration, composed of men of great talents, who entered upon office not ten months ago, with this particular and distinct declaration, that all those who had preceded them had been in the wrong; that they had "clubbed the battalion;" that every thing required correction and amendment; that nothing was in its place; that our resources were exhausted, our credit destroyed, our faith violated, and that we were unable to maintain our own rank among the nations of Europe, much less to assist others in regaining that which belonged to them. What followed? At the end of ten months, these very gentlemen say that the resources of the country remain unimpaired. Those who but ten months ago, exclaimed that they were in a state of the utmost dilapidation, now tell us—not that they have been retrieved, not that they have been re-established—but that they remain unimpaired. That is, that they never have been impaired. It was certainly very satisfactory to every man

that there should be even this stale tribute paid to those who had been formerly loaded with censure. But surely it would be too much to expect that any man who had ever regulated his conduct by, who had followed the footsteps of, or who had considered the name of Pitt, as connected with the glory and happiness of England, could pass this part of His Majesty's speech unnoticed. Amidst the accusations that had been vented against the late administration, those against their foreign connections were not the least virulent. It had been said, that the continent had been lost by the confederacies which England had so ill put together. But what was the nature of the system that had been substituted? It seemed as if those who had happened to hear that a confederacy was a bad thing, had determined to repel every ally that might, by opposite conduct, have been attracted to us.

But of this new system it would be worth while to trace the operation as well as the cause. On the first day of the first session of a new Parliament, during whose existence the fate of the world might probably be decided, in whose time a struggle would, in all likelihood, take place, that would terminate either in total destruction or complete safety, such a discussion was assuredly most important and most proper. The speech and address which, at such a period as the present, were any thing but mere matters of form, might be considered in two distinct views. The first was as a mutual pledge between the Sovereign and his People. Had it been possible to confine the speech and address to a description of the dangers of the country and

an enumeration of the best means of deliverance from those dangers, he would have been well content that the address should have gone up without a whisper of remark. But there was another view of the subject. The present was the constitutional opportunity afforded for both Houses of Parliament to express their opinion, not only of the relations of Government with foreign states, but of the relations of Government with the country. Of this he begged to be understood that he was fully satisfied, whether, when the official documents should be laid on the table, it might or might not appear that there had been any remissness, or want of dexterity, or blameable attention to delusive promises, that the cause of this country against France, would not admit of the smallest question. The only matter in dispute was not whether or not the cause was sufficiently strong, but whether or not the cause had been prosecuted in the best manner and at the most proper time. If it could be proved (which he did not in the least degree mean to insinuate), that the negociation had wilfully failed, he should be sorry that that circumstance should lead to the slightest hesitation in giving the most unqualified support to the war. In prosecuting his consideration of the subject, he could not acquit the late House of Commons of an act of inconsiderate confidence. And here he must observe, that with every man in the House, he sincerely lamented the absence and loss of that great man, with whom, in politics, he had so frequently differed; but the memory of which differences ought no longer to exist. Those who were in habits of private friendship

with that great man* might deplore him more feelingly, but it was impossible that they could admire more than himself his transcendent talents—talents, the strength of which was sufficiently evinced by the awe and fear which his presence inspired in the breasts of his political opponents. Having stated thus much, he trusted he should be acquitted of any disrespectful imputation in what he was about to say. In order to judge correctly of the situation in which the country now found itself, it was necessary to revert to the last confederacy. After the dissolution of that confederacy, and considering the state in which Prussia and Russia stood, what was the clear and obvious policy of France, and what was the clear and obvious policy of England? He would state it fairly. No man could hesitate in saying, that unfortunate as that confederacy was, broken and disjointed as it might be, yet were its scattered limbs not without life and vigour. It was the clear and obvious policy of England to unite those divided parts, and to endeavour to produce an energetic whole. On the other hand, it was the clear and obvious policy of France to effect a complete dismemberment of the confederation, and if that could not be completely accomplished in reality, at least to accomplish it in appearance. Now, what had been the conduct of the two Powers? Prussia signed a treaty of access to the confederacy just previous to its dissolution; an unequivocal proof of the disposition of the court of Berlin, manifested still more strongly by the declaration since published. Subsequently, however, Prussia was forced into measures which brought upon her the prompt

* Mr. Fox.

resentment of this country. But at the time that the House of Commons approved of that resentment, did they know that a negociation was carrying on with France, for the restoration of that which Prussia had seized? There were two distinct questions. If it were simply asked, would you go to war for the recovery of that unjustly wrested from you? the answer would be, yes; but if a negociation were carrying on to obtain the same object in another quarter, then the war would be superfluous. Even were this principle doubtful, yet, coupled with the certainty that it was the interest of this country to preserve Prussia, to retain her as an enemy to France, and to put up with, or overlook any conduct that might involve Great Britain in a contest with her, it became established and irresistible. The House would see what were the dreadful consequences of an original error in this respect; consequences which were now felt too late. While we were in the incongruous situation to which it gave rise, a war commenced between Prussia and France, undeniably instigated by the demands made by this country, through her negociator at Paris. It was true, Hanover was not the sole cause of this rupture, but it was the main one, as the subsequent declaration of Prussia proved. The conduct of Great Britain to Prussia was therefore thus: Prussia, unable to resist the power of France, encroached upon us; we had, however, the option to pass over the just cause of complaint which we possessed in consequence, and leave untouched the only power in Europe which appeared capable of being the germ of an alliance hostile to the

ambitious views of France. But the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers had been the converse of that policy. By their conduct, Prussia had been compelled to act without our advice and assistance, and to plunge into a war, of which, if our advice could not have prevented it, our assistance might have meliorated the termination.

He did not mean to cast the slightest imputation on the diplomatic character of the noble lord employed by Government on this occasion (Lord Morpeth); no man was better fitted for the office, both from the qualities of his head and heart, and because no man had been a more constant advocate for the justice of the cause of this country: but would any man of common reflection say that if the restoration of Hanover were the sole object, it was worth while to make war against Prussia? The British Government had continued at war with Prussia as long as the Prussian resources were unimpaired, and her strength unexhausted; but as soon as there seemed the prospect of a war between France and Prussia, an Ambassador was dispatched to Berlin, with instructions adapted to all possibilities, except that which was most probable, namely, that war had actually commenced; for that no provision had been made, an event of which the most common information might have shewn the likelihood. As soon, however, as Lord Morpeth returned, our Government began to perceive their error, and to think that there was really something like war between France and Prussia—from the trifling circumstance that the Prussian army was annihilated! They then sent a few military men to their aid, and when the Prussian

monarchy shall be destroyed, they will perhaps send an army! When the gentlemen opposite to him came into power, they exclaimed that nothing was more shabby than the foreign diplomacy of Great Britain. It was even said, that there was not a man at a foreign court capable of writing a letter. As it was an undoubted right possessed by the good people of this country to canvass the conduct of their statesmen, he remembered to have heard it asserted in one of these political assemblages, that all our ambassadors in future were to be Ajaxes, Ulysses, and Phœnixes. Now, it so happened, that there had been only one remove. Mr. Adair had succeeded Sir A. Paget at Vienna. Of course, as he was single, he must be the Phœnix! But, in our diplomatic intercourse with foreign courts, we were taught to look for perfect frankness, sincerity, and openness; freedom from trick and intrigue, and a sort of pellucid simplicity. Now, what was the first tangible proof of this simplicity? Why, a Minister at Paris negociating for peace, and another at Berlin instigating war for the same object! Such conduct might be dexterous—it might be able—it might be any thing but frank, open, and undisguised.

As to that passage in the Speech and the Address, which congratulated the country, that in those councils which preceded the war between Prussia and France, His Majesty had no share, he was astonished that such a topic of consolation could have entered the head of any Minister. Instead of shewing that they had attempted to prevent evils, Ministers called for approbation on the ground of having abstained from

any interference! But he believed neither Berlin nor Vienna, nor even London, could be thus consoled. It ought to have been our care that the difference between France and Prussia should not have been too suddenly blown into a flame, lest it should have been too suddenly extinguished. In this part of the Address it was, therefore, impossible for him to concur: he by no means meant to imply doubt of the justice of His Majesty's quarrel with Prussia; but if France, by a nominal and illusive transfer of Hanover to Prussia, could plant a cause of dissension between Prussia and Great Britain, was not this a contrivance of the enemy which nothing but the plain and simple diplomacy adopted by our Government could be blind to? France found Great Britain and Prussia in amity, with a tendency to coalesce. What was her object? To divide them; and by a pretended transfer to Prussia of the hereditary dominions of the King of Great Britain, to create a war between the two countries. With respect to the negociation with France, this was not a time to discuss it, although some observations made by the honourable mover of the Address might justify some strong comments upon that negociation. But it would be better to reserve these until the papers relative to the subject should be in possession of the House. He thought, however, that it would be but fair to state to His Majesty's Ministers what, as far as the documents had transpired, appeared to him to be the defective parts of their case. The British declaration contained three unproved allegations. The first was, that the overture for peace had come from France; and, as this was also insisted on in the

Speech, he had no doubt that Ministers had something to produce which would give an entirely new colour to this part of the transaction. He denied, however, entertaining any opinion that had the offer of peace proceeded from England, Ministers would have been culpable. Had peace been a desirable thing, it mattered little in what quarter the proposal for it originated.

Adverting to Mr. Fox's first letter to M. Talleyrand, he observed, that there were fifty other and better ways in which the intelligence which it contained might have been communicated; and he condemned most strongly the reception which the answer to that letter experienced. The assertion that the British Government were beginning a new course, as illustrated by the transaction alluded to, was false. Never had the British Government been the stimulators of assassination. Had he held the situation which the late right honourable gentleman occupied, he should have thought it his duty to repel the accusation with contempt and indignation. The second unproved allegation, contained in the British declaration, related to the basis of the negociation, which was asserted to be the *uti possidetis*; now throughout the negociation the basis referred to was that stated in Mr. Fox's letter, the mutual honour of the countries—a basis no more like the *uti possidetis*, than it was like the *propria quæ maribus*.

The third unproved allegation, which he had no doubt that the French Government had completely misrepresented, was, that we had refused to treat except in conjunction with our allies. Now, from the partial documents that had been

published, it appeared that that had been the case in the first instance, but that afterwards the British Government had treated alone. He had no doubt that this would be satisfactorily cleared up, as the address stated, in high terms of panegyric, the great care of His Majesty for his allies. The particular mention of Russia and Sweden was proof that some misrepresentation existed. Having thus stated the points which it was necessary for His Majesty's Ministers to elucidate, and having considered the state of this country with respect to foreign relations, he proceeded to examine our domestic situation. It was impossible but that he must look at our means of internal strength with the utmost seriousness. We must examine the physical force, and the spirit by which it was actuated. Our internal policy was intimately connected with this contemplation. And first, with regard to the dissolution of the last Parliament; there was a great difference between questioning the exercise of independent prerogative, and questioning the propriety of exercising it at such a period. If the dissolution were prompted by party views, with the hope of giving a triumph to Ministers, and if, for these purposes, they created and revived party differences, at a time when they loudly called for unanimity, their conduct was highly culpable. But he had no doubt that Ministers had some great public advantage to gain: for he could not suppose that they merely wished to obtain a few supporters in Parliament; at least this he was sure they would not avow.

Another class of observations would apply to the practical means of defence and attack which the country possessed,

and the mode in which those means had been managed and applied. Now, it was most extraordinary that in reading the speech, and the history of the last year, no one could suspect that the country was at war. There was not a feature of war in the speech, nor an act of war during the last year, in which Government could assume any credit. There had not been even a single warlike plan, much less any warlike achievement. As for the internal defence of the country, a most laboured scheme had been brought forward last session, and when the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham) by whom it had been produced, had been repeatedly questioned whether or not it was intended to put it in execution, the answer was uniformly in the affirmative. In no single parish, however, had the slightest step been taken towards this end; and yet it was a reliance on the scheme that had been held out to induce Parliament to allow the volunteers to crumble away, the militia to be diminished, and the regular army to be sent experimenting. And what kind of experimenting? We had heard of a great statesman, who stripped the country of troops, which he employed on various active services, and then boasted that he defended it at a distance. Could the gentlemen opposite make a similar boast? After orders, and counter-orders, and confirmations of orders, and revocations of confirmations, and countermands, &c. &c. &c. an expedition actually did sail from the Downs, and arrived—where? at Plymouth! Certainly a place not very well provided with means of defence; and had this same expedition proceeded to some possession of

the enemy not superior in strength to Plymouth, they very possibly might have succeeded in taking it. But perhaps this was meant as an experiment. It might have been said, "We'll sail from the Downs, land at Plymouth, and surprise the dockers." It is prudent to try to swim upon a table, before committing oneself to the waves. The right honourable gentleman was not accustomed to salt water, and he wished to begin with fresh. But could the country forget the loudness of his accusations against his predecessors for what he termed their supineness and neglect? Yet what had he himself done? When war was raging in Prussia, our peace minister was on his return! The whole amount of the right honourable gentleman's campaign was a fire-work before Boulogne, and—(yet that wanted confirmation)—an embarkation on the Paddington canal. But for the uncommon openness of the weather, it is probable that his army would have been frozen up at Uxbridge—(a laugh). But these were not the heaviest charges against the right honourable gentleman. That right honourable gentleman had declared it as his opinion, that in all military establishments, it was not the form, but the soul, the spirit, the nice sense of honour, that were to be cultivated and encouraged. Now, was not that right honourable gentleman aware, that by partial measures, he had disgusted and dispirited the army more than he had improved their character by the monopoly of shoulder-knots and cockades? The report of their discontent must have reached him. If not, it was time that he should be told of it. Let him recollect the recal of officers who had nobly fought and conquered for their

country. Was Sir John Stuart's being superseded by the brother of a Secretary of State (General Fox) calculated to give animation and enthusiasm to the army? And when an expedition was ready for embarkation, were not the hopes of many gallant officers, who already anticipated victory at the heads of their brigades, disappointed, because the rank of a favourite of that right honourable gentleman (Colonel Crawford), to whom he meant no disrespect, was not entitled to command them? He had before observed, that, in the speech, all notice of war seemed studiously to have been passed over, and yet some debts of gratitude remained to be paid; some acts of heroism had been displayed, which, had it been for no other purpose than to shew that the British army already possessed the character which the right honourable gentleman only wished it did possess, might surely have been mentioned. To the records of Parliament, the historian looked for his materials. It was cruel to deprive the hero of the honourable reward of his military achievements, and it was disgraceful that Government should dislike to sprinkle over the gloom of despondency with some of those achievements. It was true, they might say, that these achievements were not of their planning; but this was a period when party feelings should not withhold every glorious incitement to great actions.

On these grounds, on the deficiency of that which ought to have been recorded in the speech, it was impossible for him to satisfy his feelings with the continuation of that omission in the address. The usual form, in similar instances, had been to endeavour to render the answer to the speech a vehicle for such sentiments as it might be wished to add;

but the present speech was so contrived, that there was not a niche in which the additional sentiments of Parliament could be properly placed, although many important points had been disregarded. There were many topics on which an amendment to the address might be introduced, so many that he preferred substituting a new address altogether, leaving it to the option of the House which to adopt. He therefore proposed, by way of amendment, to omit the whole of the address subsequent to the words "His Majesty's Commons," and to introduce the following:—

"To assure His Majesty that it is with increased affection, attachment, and loyalty, that His Majesty's faithful Commons meet His Majesty in this ninth Parliament of His Majesty's assembling. And that, amidst all those evils and pressures of war, and those tremendous and unparalleled successes of a formidable and unrelenting enemy, which render the present crisis peculiarly awful and alarming, the first and most fervent prayer of His Majesty's faithful Commons is, that it may please Divine Providence to grant to this favoured country the prolongation of a life and of a reign, the value and the blessings of which each succeeding year teaches us more highly to appreciate. And to express to His Majesty our unshaken determination to stand by His Majesty throughout all the difficulties and dangers of the times; in defence of the laws and liberties of this realm; in defence of His Majesty's sacred person and Government, and of a throne endeared to all classes of His Majesty's subjects by the virtues of the sovereign who adorns it. To offer to His Majesty our humble and affec-

tionate condolence on that share of the public calamities of Europe which has come home to the personal and domestic feelings of His Majesty and his Royal Family, by the death of that gallant and illustrious prince, the late Duke of Brunswick, a prince connected by such near alliances with His Majesty's royal house, and with the throne of these kingdoms.—That while we most sensibly participate in the deep and poignant grief with which His Majesty contemplates the issue of the late campaign on the continent, we studiously abstain from suggesting to His Majesty, as a topic of consolation, what we well know His Majesty's intelligence and magnanimity would disdain to receive as such—the interruption of His Majesty's intercourse with the court of Berlin during the last eight months, which precluded His Majesty from any knowledge of those councils by which the war between Prussia and France was so unfortunately precipitated. Satisfied as we are of the justice of the original grounds of His Majesty's complaints against Prussia, we are yet unable to refrain from deeply deploring their consequences. We are not furnished with any means of judging how far those complaints were capable of being adjusted, without recourse being had to actual hostilities; or how far any discussions which may have taken place subsequently to His Majesty's gracious message of the 21st of April, were directed to that object. But we cannot but lament that the obvious artifice of the common enemy, in making a fraudulent and nominal transfer of His Majesty's electoral dominions to the King of Prussia, should have been so far crowned with success

as to have involved His Majesty in war with the only state in Europe, whose resources were yet unimpaired, and whose arms might, at some happier hour, have been employed with effect in a new confederacy against France; and that the too successful policy of the enemy in amusing this country with an insincere and protracted negociation should have obtained for France the opportunity of goading Prussia (by unmeasured and accumulated injuries) to that premature, unconcerted, and unassisted effort, which has terminated in the overthrow of that powerful monarchy, and in the complete subjugation of its dominions. We cannot but express our regret that the policy which appears to have been ultimately adopted towards Prussia should not have been recognised and acted upon until the occasion was gone by; and that His Majesty's plenipotentiary should have arrived only in time to be an helpless witness of that prodigious ruin and destruction which a more timely interposition of His Majesty's advice and assistance might possibly have averted or alleviated. To acknowledge His Majesty's goodness in having directed to be laid before us the details of the negociation so long carried on at Paris. We entertain the fullest conviction that the just and moderate sentiments by which His Majesty has proved himself to have been animated in the several preceding negociations for peace with France, have alike actuated His Majesty on the late occasion: and while we look with anxious interest for the development of those circumstances which can have deferred for so long a period that termination of the negociatio nich it is evident, as well from notorious facts

as from the language of His Majesty's declaration, the artifices and pretensions of the enemy rendered from the beginning almost certain and unavoidable; we doubt not but we shall see, in the whole course and tenour of the proceedings on the part of His Majesty, fresh instances of that desire for peace, and of that sincerity and good faith in the pursuit of it, which have so often been frustrated by the ambition of the French Government, as well as fresh proofs of the expediency of adhering to the policy of treating for general peace, and only in conjunction with our allies. —That we receive with the utmost satisfaction the assurance of His Majesty's uninterrupted concert and good understanding with the Emperor of Russia; trusting that neither in war nor in negociation, His Majesty's councils will be separated from those of our ally, distinguished alike by perseverance and good faith. The continued prosecution of the war being necessarily imposed upon His Majesty, we rejoice in the assurance that it is intended to prosecute it with vigour, earnestly imploring His Majesty that no apprehension of embarrassing the conduct of a negociation by acquisitions made during its progress, may ever again be suffered to relax for a moment the military and naval operations of this country.—That if we have not the triumph and satisfaction, as in former years of war, of offering to His Majesty our congratulations on any signal and decisive victory by sea, we nevertheless reflect, with just pride and acknowledgment, on the several distinguished instances in which the skill, valour, and intrepidity of British officers and seamen have been displayed in their

usual lustre, and with their accustomed success, over equal or superior squadrons of the enemy. But we cannot help lamenting, in justice to the naval service, as well as to the interests of the country, that supineness or mismanagement, by which the predatory squadrons of the enemy have been permitted to range, unchecked, among our West India colonies, and to escape with impunity, and by which our commerce has been exposed to a degree of annoyance highly injurious to the interests, and discreditable to the maritime superiority of Great Britain. With equal sorrow, and with no less astonishment, we have observed those delays and uncertainties, and that apparent perplexity and fluctuation of councils which have marked the conduct of the war department of the state, which have hitherto prevented the execution of those measures which Ministers persuaded the late Parliament to enact, and upon which they themselves professed so greatly to rely for the internal defence of the empire; and delays which have so long confined our expeditions within our own ports, and have rendered the military preparations of this Government at once ineffectual to the annoyance of the enemy, and a just ground of dissatisfaction and disappointment to the nation at large. We rejoice in the opportunity of congratulating His Majesty on the capture of that valuable and important settlement, the Cape of Good Hope, by those distinguished officers, Sir D. Baird and Sir H. Popham. We have, however, the consolation and gratification of being able to recal His Majesty's attention to acquisitions and achievements in the course of the present year, by which, notwithstanding the

apparent inactivity of His Majesty's present servants, the credict of His Majesty's arms, by sea and land, has been sustained in the different quarters of the globe. We congratulate His Majesty on the signal advantages obtained by His Majesty's arms in the expedition under Sir H. Popham and General Beresford, against the Spanish settlement of Buenos Ayres; advantages which, if seasonably supported and diligently improved, must be in the highest degree valuable to this country, opening fresh channels of commercial enterprise, and affording new and increasing encouragement to British manufactures and navigation; advantages doubly important at a moment when the other markets of the world are attempted to be closed against us. —We enter, with heartfelt exultation, into the sentiments so justly expressed by His Majesty, on the brilliant victory obtained on the plains of Maida, by His Majesty's land forces, under the gallant and able conduct of Sir J. Stuart, over a French army, superior in numbers. We feel, with His Majesty, the full value of the seasonable check given by this splendid achievement to the overweening confidence of the enemy; and of the proof which it affords that the character and constitution of the British army were not inadequate, upon their ancient footing, to maintain, unimpaired, the lustre of the British name, and the military glory of our ancestors.—That we shall nevertheless examine, with due attention and solicitude, into the effect of that new system which the late Parliament were induced to adopt, for improving the character, as well as augmenting the amount of His Majesty's regular forces; willing

to hope that we shall have the satisfaction of discovering an improvement so striking, and an augmentation so rapid and abundant, as at once to have supplied all the deficiencies arising from the disuse of such measures as have been either abolished or suspended, and to compensate for the certain, permanent, and large addition which they have necessarily occasioned to the military expenditure of the state. We shall investigate with equal care, the state of our other military establishments, and particularly that of the volunteers, the cheap, efficient, and patriotic defence of the United Kingdom; we trust and believe that we shall find them, in spite of all discouragement and discountenance, neither abated in zeal, nor, as yet, materially reduced in numbers, at a period when it appears but too probable that their services may be more than ever essential to their country.—That we are fully sensible of His Majesty's paternal affection for his subjects, manifested in the regret which he expresses at being compelled to call upon them for sacrifices of so great an extent as may be necessary in the present crisis of affairs.—That, however painful the duty of imposing fresh burthens upon the people, we shall, however, not shrink from discharging it; satisfied as we are of the prevailing determination of all ranks of the community to submit with cheerfulness to the indispensable necessity of providing means for the continuance of a contest, in the issue of which public safety and private happiness are alike inseparably involved.—That it is a consolation to us as to His Majesty under the pressure of this inevitable necessity, to learn the flourishing state of public credit, and the pro-

ductiveness of the several branches of the revenue: and that we agree entirely with His Majesty in attributing these salutary effects in a great measure to the system so wisely begun, and so properly persevered in, of raising a considerable proportion of the supplies within the year, a system which has happily disappointed the predictions of the external and internal enemies of His Majesty and his Government.—That we earnestly wish it were in our power to close our address here. But we feel that we should be wanting, as well in duty to His Majesty, as in fidelity to that people in whose name and on whose behalf we are proffering sacrifices, unexampled in magnitude and indefinite in duration, if we were to disguise from His Majesty the deep and general sentiment which prevails respecting the measures which preceded and accompanied the late general election. Far be it from us to question His Majesty's undoubted prerogative. But we cannot reflect without concern and disapprobation upon the circumstances of surprise and deception which attended the sudden exercise of that prerogative in the dissolution of the late Parliament; and particularly of his servants to mislead upon the irreverent use of His Majesty's royal name in a proclamation summoning the late Parliament to meet on a fixed and no distant day, issued at a period when the measure of dissolving that Parliament must already have been in contemplation. Connected also with this subject, we cannot forbear to notice rumours, which strongly prevail throughout the country, of the most improper and unconstitutional interference of His Majesty's Ministers in the course of the

late Elections: rumours at once highly discreditable and injurious to His Majesty's Government, and to the independent character of Parliament. We hope that upon inquiry and examination they may be proved to be utterly unfounded. But, convinced as we are, that the tendency (though we trust not the effect) of such interference, as is alledged, must have been to revolt and disgust the well-affected part of the community, and to sow distraction and discontent in place of that unanimity which is so loudly called for, at a moment when the prosperity of the British empire depends upon the consenting and cordial co-operation of all orders and descriptions of the people; convinced also, that it is our peculiar duty, as it is the common interest of all those who prize, as it deserves, the inestimable blessing of a free form of Government, to mark with our strongest reprehension a perversion of power which would be too well calculated to favour those delusive and dangerous theories which stigmatize the House of Commons as an inadequate representative of the people. But while we feel this most unpleasant duty forced upon us, in vindication of our own independence, and of the rights of those whom we represent, we humbly and earnestly intreat His Majesty to be persuaded, that neither this, nor any other misconduct of His Majesty's Ministers, can essentially affect the firm and settled purpose of this House and of the great body of the nation, to unite in that general cause, and against that common danger—in comparison to which all other considerations, however important in themselves, are at the present moment, unfortunately, inferior

and subordinate. And we venture confidently to assure His Majesty, that great and unexampled as are the difficulties and dangers which surround us, His Majesty possesses in the wealth and prosperity of his dominions, in the loyalty and firmness of his Parliament, in the bravery of his fleets and armies, and in the affection, zeal, and courage of his people—resources, which, if wisely called forth, and diligently and judiciously applied, are yet amply sufficient to ensure the safety and honour of the British Empire; and to maintain the only remaining hope, under Divine Providence, for the restoration of the liberties and happiness of mankind." Mr. Canning added, that those gentlemen who thought that in the address to His Majesty, the House ought to overlook all our naval and military achievements, would doubtless prefer the original address; but those who thought with him, that what was cheering and consolatory should not be sunk into the shade, would, he trusted, approve of the amendment which he had just read. Apprehending, however, that the tendency of pressing his amendment would be to cause a division of the votes between the two addresses, and anxious that nothing should be occasioned, on his part, which might have a tendency to throw a damp on the spirit of the country, it was not his intention to press his amendment to a division.

After a protracted discussion, in which Lord Howick, Lord Castlereagh, and Lord H. Petty took a prominent part, the original motion on the address was put and carried *nem. con.*

CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION.

MARCH, 1807.

List of His Majesty's Ministers, as it stood in March, 1807.

CABINET MINISTERS.

President of the Council	Viscount Sidmouth.
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Erskine.
Lord Privy Seal	Lord Holland.
First Lord of the Treasury, (Prime Minister).....	Lord Grenville.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.
Master-general of the Ordnance	Earl of Moira.
Secretary of State for the Home Department.....	Earl Spencer.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.....	Lord Howick.
Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies	Right Hon. William Windham.
Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench...	Lord Ellenborough.
Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer	Lord Henry Petty.
(A Seat without an Office) ...	Earl Fitzwilliam.

PERSONS IN THE MINISTRY OF IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	His Grace the Duke of Bedford.
Lord High Chancellor	Right Hon. George Ponsonby.

Chief Secretary	Right Hon. William Elliot.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Sir John Newport.
Attorney-General	Mr. Plunket.

List of His Majesty's Ministers, as it stood in April, 1807.

CABINET MINISTERS.

President of the Council	Earl Camden.
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Eldon.
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland.
First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister)	Duke of Portland.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Lord Mulgrave.
Master-General of the Ordnance.....	Earl of Chatham.
President of the Board of Trade	Earl Bathurst.
Secretary of State for the Home Department	Lord Hawkesbury.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.....	Right Hon. George Canning.
Secretary of State for the Department of War, and the Colonies	Lord Castlereagh.
Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, and also Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.....	Right Hon. Spencer Perceval.

PERSONS IN THE MINISTRY OF IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	Duke of Richmond.
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Manners.
Chief Secretary	Sir Arthur Wellesley.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. John Foster.
Attorney-General	Mr. Saurin.

Mr. Brand this day moved, "That it is contrary to the first duties of the confidential servants of the Crown, to restrain themselves by any pledge expressed or implied, from offering to the King any advice, which the course of circumstances may render necessary, for the welfare and security of any part of His Majesty's extensive empire."

Mr. Osborn moved, "that the other orders of the day be now read."

Mr. Secretary Canning rose, amidst a loud call for the question from the opposition benches, and spoke to the following effect:—

I am not surprised, Sir, on a motion brought forward for the purpose of turning out an Administration, that those who support it should wish to drown by clamour, what those Ministers have to say in their defence. But, however reluctant I may be to trespass on the time of the House, at this late hour, and in the exhausted state of the House, I shall not be deterred by clamour from offering what I have to urge in my vindication. The noble lord's (Howick) speech seems to place me in a state of retrospective responsibility, for counsels with which I could not be acquainted, and for that dismissal, which was the consequence of his own suicidal act. If I were to follow the course that has been pursued, up to the speech of the noble lord, I should contend, what has not been denied on either side, that this question is an issue between the King

and his late Ministers. This is the first instance since the time of Charles, that a Sovereign has been brought to the bar of Parliament. The late Ministers by their own acts rendered their dismissal unavoidable, and I deny that I or any of my colleagues gave any counsel on the occasion, or intrigued for the purpose of getting into their places. On the contrary, they have laboured to prevent the confusion that ensued, from the measures that have been adopted. In whatever way the bill (the Roman Catholic bill), may be disposed of, I did not think it desirable that a change of administration should take place in consequence of it. But, when my Sovereign was without a Ministry, and called upon me for my services, I did not conceive myself at liberty to withhold them. Nor do I lament the part that I have taken.

As to the circumstances that caused a change of Government, I do not think that there was any intention to deceive His Majesty. I shall not impute bad motives to any man; but though there was no intention to deceive, there was too much misunderstanding in the progress of that transaction. When His Majesty had declared that he would not go a step beyond the act of 1793, it ought to have excited the attention of his Ministers, and they should then have distinctly explained what was meant to be conceded by the measure. For my part, I should prefer granting to the Catholics what was refused by the bill, and withholding

what the bill conceded. I would sooner give the civil distinction, than the sword.

As to the personal call of the noble lord upon me—I answer, that I do wish to form my conduct on the model of that great man, my late right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt). The noble lord has assumed that he was of the same opinion with myself on the subject of this bill; but the noble lord has no right to judge of me, but from my public votes in Parliament. I have given but one vote on this question, and that was in 1804, with Mr. Pitt, against the Catholic petition. But the conduct of my late right honourable friend, when he went out of office, because he could not carry the great measure he proposed, cannot be better illustrated than by comparing it with that of the late Ministers. What was required in the stipulations claimed by the late Ministers? That they should be allowed to recommend one policy, whilst they pursued another. The terms upon which they wished to hold their offices were, that they should be allowed to propose measures, that they might afterwards abandon them. The yearly moving of the question would have the effect of making an unfair division of the popularity and odium. The odium would be great, and all fall upon the Crown: the benefit would be small, and that the Catholics might have; but the whole of the popularity the Ministers were to have.

The noble lord has told me of the majority he

shall have, and of the vexatious motions that are to follow. But why waste his majorities? If sufficient to carry vexatious motions to embarrass His Majesty's Government, they would *à fortiori* be sufficient for the relief of His Majesty's subjects; the noble lord ought, therefore, to carry his original measure.

It has been said that no notice was given of an exculpatory statement till after several partial publications had taken place; but this I deny. The noble lord has chosen to insinuate that the King had in fact some secret adviser, and that the communication between His Majesty and those who are now in his councils, began much earlier than we are willing to avow; and he instances Lord Eldon's visit to Windsor (I think on the Saturday se'nnight preceding the change) as a proof of this secret communication. I would not accuse the noble lord of wilful misrepresentation, but I must ask him plainly, in the face of the House, does he not know what was the cause of Lord Eldon's visit to Windsor? Does he or does he not know, that previous to his going to Windsor, Lord Eldon waited on Lord Grenville, and communicated to him distinctly the subject of his intended interview with the King, adding, at the same time, a solemn assurance, that he would mention no other subject to His Majesty. The noble lord may insinuate that Lord Eldon did not keep his word. I believe he did, and at least I may safely leave it to the House to determine,

whether the conduct of Lord Eldon, such as I have described it, affords fair grounds for a presumption of insincerity and falsehood? And I will add, Sir, that nothing but the extreme delicacy of the subject itself, upon which alone Lord Eldon went, and upon which the noble lord must know he went, to communicate with His Majesty, prevents me from satisfying the House, by a distinct disclosure of it, how very far removed it was from any thing of a political nature.

I know not whether it is intended to extend these insinuations to other members of the new Administraion, but as expressions have dropped from many gentlemen, on the other side of the House, which appear to convey that charge of intrigue and secret cabal, I think it right to say distinctly for myself, and I say it with equal confidence for my right honourable friend (Mr. Perceval) near me, and for the noble duke (the Duke of Portland) who is at the head of His Majesty's Government, that not only we have not to answer for any secret or unfair attempts to obtain the situation we now hold, but that we did, each according to our measure and opportunities, exert ourselves fairly and honestly to prevent the mischief which might be apprehended as likely to attend a change of administration in the present circumstances of the country. If when the King was left without a Ministry, and the country without a Government, we have not hesitated to obey the call made upon us, we were

not, however, so rash, so presumptuous, or so blind, in the pursuit of objects of ambition, to the real dangers and difficulties of the times, as to labour and intrigue for so perilous a succession. For myself, I confidently aver, that on the first intimation which I received, from authority which I believed to be unquestionable, of the strong difference of opinion subsisting between the King and his Ministers, I took the determination of communicating what I had learnt, and I did communicate it without delay, to that part of the late administration, with which, in spite of political differences, I had continued, and with which (so far as my own feelings are concerned) I still wish to continue, in habits of personal friendship and regard. I communicated it for the express purpose, and with the most earnest advice and exhortation, that they should lose no time in coming to such an explanation and accommodation on the subject as should prevent matters from going to extremities. And it has been no small satisfaction to me to find, in the correspondence which I have since had an opportunity of reading, that as the first attempts at explanation, on the part of Ministers, appear to have been made on the day subsequent to my making this communication, my intention to do good, though not ultimately successful, was at least not wholly without effect. Precisely of the same sort was the conduct of my right honourable friend (Mr. Perceval) towards that part of the Government with whom

he had opportunity of communication. With respect to the noble duke at the head of the administration, I can state with full confidence, that the first intercourse which he had with His Majesty on this occasion, was taken advantage of on his part, not for the purpose of inflaming differences, and incurring or precipitating a change, but of advising and anxiously recommending a full and amicable, and, if possible, a satisfactory explanation.

I venture, then, fearlessly to appeal to the House, whether we can be justly charged with having taken any undue advantage of the circumstances which led to the late change. Our only crime in this respect is, that when the difference between His Majesty and his late servants became irreconcilable, and when it was obvious that that administration must go out, we would not consent to join with them in pushing our Sovereign to the wall, by reducing him to the alternative of taking them back upon their own terms, to be at their mercy, or of leaving the country without a Government.—But, Sir, when I contend, that we are not responsible, and cannot in common sense, be held to be so, for acts which were done many weeks before our coming into office, let it not be supposed, however, that I should feel any reluctance to take my full share of responsibility for that part of the King's conduct, which is connected with the correspondence between His Majesty and his Ministers. Far

from it. I should indeed be proud to be associated, in any degree, to His Majesty's share of that correspondence. And painful as the whole of this discussion has been, painful as it must be to every man who values, not the forms only, but the essence of our Constitution, to see the King brought here as it were in person, to be judged at the bar of this House, it is some consolation to reflect, that from the bar of the House of Commons, there still lies an appeal to the tribunal of the country. It is a great consolation to every loyal mind to feel, that in proportion as the Sovereign has been made most unconstitutionally responsible in his own person, he must inevitably become personally better known to his people. And when that people shall see their Sovereign, full as he is of years, and labouring under heavy afflictions, yet retaining, in the vigour of a green old age, soundness of judgment, a promptness and vivacity of intellect, which have enabled him to contend singly in this painful controversy against the united talents of all his Ministers; when they shall see him displaying powers as fit as those of any of those Ministers, or of any other man that hears me, for the discussion of the most perplexing questions, and the conduct of the most difficult affairs; perhaps, Sir, I say, when all this shall be made manifest to the people, and when by this manifestation, all these sinister and disheartening rumours, which sometimes accident and sometimes industry propagates through the

country, shall have received their decisive confutation, perhaps it may fairly be doubted whether the inconvenience, the hazard, and the unconstitutional tendency of this wanton and unjustifiable arraignment of the personal conduct of the King, may not be more than compensated by the advantage of this display of his personal qualities.

And while we regret that those qualities should have been put to such a trial, the country will rejoice in the hope which arises from the manner in which that trial has been sustained, that, after having for near half a century watched with unceasing care and paternal anxiety over the interests and happiness of his people, he may yet, under the protection of Providence, add to that length of life, and to that series of labours, many, many years more, of care and anxiety certainly, but of protecting and efficient care, and of anxiety vigorous and active for the benefit of his people. —For the advice of restoring Lord Melville to His Majesty's councils, I am ready to take my full share of responsibility; but I think that such a recommendation would have come with a better grace from the honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) and his friends, who conducted a late prosecution against that noble lord to a fortunate acquittal.

I shall only trouble the House with one word more. Whatever may be the issue of the division of this night, or of the series of divisions with which, if successful, it is to be followed,

His Majesty's Ministers are determined to stand by their Sovereign, even though circumstances should occur, in which they may find it their duty to appeal to the country.

The result of the division was—

For Mr. Osborn's Amendment	258
For the Original Motion	226
Majority for Ministers	32

EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN.

FEBRUARY 3d, 1808.

Mr. Ponsonby this day made the motion, of which he had given notice, relative to the Expedition to Copenhagen. The object he had in view, was principally to ascertain how far His Majesty's Ministers had been justified in advising His Majesty to employ his naval and military forces in the Expedition against Copenhagen. The topics necessary for the mature consideration of the subject were to inquire, first, what the disposition of Denmark had been; next, what the conduct of Russia had been; and lastly, what means France possessed of executing any project hostile to this country in the Baltic.

At the close of a former war, an apology was stated to have been received from Denmark for having entered into a hostile confederacy against Great Britain, which apology "was founded on the avowed inability of Denmark to resist the operation of external influence and

the threats of a formidable neighbouring power." He had inquired into this subject, and had been told that Denmark never did send such an apology for the abandonment of its neutrality. He was desirous to know the truth of the fact, and he could not conceive what objection could be made to the production of the papers necessary to elucidate it, if they really existed.

He had shaped another resolution, for the purpose of ascertaining what information had been received by His Majesty's Ministers respecting the conduct of Denmark with respect to its naval force. He contended that no steps had been taken by Denmark to awaken jealousy or rouse suspicion on our part. He had made it his business to inquire what had been the conduct of Denmark with regard to their own ships, and their valuable cargoes, which were in the ports of Great Britain, at the very time that the Expedition against Copenhagen was fitting out. When Admiral Gambier was preparing to sail, many of the Danish captains hearing, amongst other rumours, that it was as likely that the British force was destined against Denmark as against any other place, consulted the Danish Consul on the subject. The Consul applied to the Chamber of Commerce in Copenhagen, a branch of the public administration of Government. He received for answer, that there was not the smallest ground for anxiety or alarm on the part of the Danish mercantile interest, for that no such circumstances existed which tended to disturb the neutrality of Denmark, or to place her in a state of hostility with Great Britain. At the time that this answer was received, there were three hundred and fifty Danish ships in British

ports, with cargoes amounting to two millions sterling. Was it possible to suppose, that under these circumstances, when the Danish Government declared to her commercial interest that they need not hurry themselves—that there was no fear of an interruption of the good understanding with Great Britain? Was it possible to suppose, that when a third of the commercial property of Denmark was in our hands, the Danish Government meditated hostility against us? Such a thing was incredible.

But it was said, that though Denmark herself might entertain no hostile disposition against Great Britain, she was likely soon to be forced into a state of hostility, and that, therefore, we were justified in seizing her marine, without any previous notice to Denmark, and without any previous behaviour on her part to provoke us to that seizure. If our conduct could be at all justified on this ground, it must be on the necessity of anticipating the views of the enemy with regard to the Danish fleet. No writer on the law of nations, or on any other law, or on common justice, had ever maintained that one Power could be justified in taking from another Power what belonged to it, unless a third Power meant, and was able, to take the same thing. The justification of this step, therefore, must rest on the necessity of it, which would depend on these circumstances—the weakness of Denmark, or her indisposition to resist compulsion; the strength of her enemy, and the certainty that she must yield to its force. Every shadow of proof that Denmark must have yielded to a hostile confederacy was out of the case. It was necessary to inquire what were the means which France

possessed of accomplishing her object. One of his resolutions went to ascertain what information His Majesty's Ministers had received respecting the power that France possessed of seizing the Danish navy. If His Majesty's Ministers knew the intentions of France on this subject, surely they were not so negligent as to omit informing themselves of her power to carry those intentions into execution. What was the relative situation of the two countries? At the time that Admiral Gambier sailed, a great part of the Danish army was encamped in Holstein; a considerable French force was also in the same place. This disposition of the two armies shewed no intention in Denmark to yield to France. Had she entertained such an intention, she would not advance a force against a French force. The question then came to be, was the French force sufficient "to induce or compel" (such were the terms of His Majesty's Declaration), Denmark to yield to the views of France? In his opinion, it was utterly insufficient. Let the House consider the situation of Denmark. She possessed considerable countries on the main continent of Europe, but she had still more valuable possessions in Norway, the Danish islands, (on one of which her capital was situated), and considerable foreign colonies. Had France, therefore, required Denmark to give up her fleet that it might be employed against Great Britain, what would Denmark have answered? "No, you have no right to make such a demand; it is a manifest usurpation on your part. If you make me choose between hostility with England and hostility with France, I prefer the latter: for

if I quarrel with England, England can take from me all my foreign possessions; she can injure my marine, and employ Sweden to attack me in Norway. It is, therefore, better for me to keep that which you cannot take from me, than to sacrifice it by a war with England." This would have been the conduct of Denmark, if the rashness and precipitation of His Majesty's ministers had not forced her into hostility against Great Britain.

The next consideration was, how far France was to receive assistance in the execution of her projects from Russia? Immediately after the conclusion of peace at Tilsit, it had been argued by many that Russia had thrown herself into the arms of France, and thereby had given preponderance to that power in the north of Europe. To those who believed this, it must have been strange to see the Danish marine taken possession of by this country, and the Russian marine permitted to rove about at pleasure. In one of Lord Leveson Gower's despatches, dated the 2d of September, (p. 191), his lordship stated, that in a conference with General Budberg, the General allowed the existence of secret articles in the Treaty of Tilsit, but declared that those articles had no reference to England. Now, it had been insisted in His Majesty's Declaration relative to Russia and Denmark, that it was a knowledge of those secret articles that had induced His Majesty to take the steps that he had done for the purpose of securing the Danish fleet. It therefore became material to know when His Majesty's Ministers became acquainted with those secret articles, how far they related to Denmark, and how

far by those articles France approached her purpose, with regard to the marine of that country.

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There were two or three most material paragraphs in the despatches of Lord L. Gower, which he should notice. The case which His Majesty's Ministers wished to make out was, that Russia had been all this while secretly instigating Denmark to join the confederacy against us; and yet on the 4th of November, His Majesty's minister at St. Petersburgh, after detailing the difficulties which he had experienced in obtaining an interview with Count Romanzow, says, that "he had been informed that some members of the Council, who had been consulted in the present very critical state of affairs, had advised the Emperor not to reject the present opportunity of re-establishing the tranquillity of the North of Europe, and that their opinion had been adopted." So then, down to the 4th of November the Emperor of Russia entertained this favourable disposition towards England! In the next despatch, inclosing the Russian Declaration, Lord Gower observes, that General Savary and the other members of the French mission, "boasted, that they had gained a complete triumph, and had carried not only this act of hostility against England, but also every other point essential to the success of Buonaparte's views." What! had they been labouring from the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit down to the beginning of November, before they could succeed in carrying these "points so essential to the success of Buonaparte's views?" and was that conduct of Russia to be

assigned as a reason for our breaking in upon a neutral nation and robbing her of her fleet? In no period of the history of any country could a similar transaction be found. But, suppose he were to concede in argument, that which was completely contradicted by the despatches on the table, that Russia had been active in forming a confederacy against Great Britain, was there the smallest proof that Denmark would have been disposed to join it? And what means had Russia to compel her? She could not march an army down the Baltic; and what fleet had she to oppose against the united fleets of England, Denmark, and Sweden? The power of protecting the neutrality of Denmark was all on the side of England, not on France. Was it probable that Denmark would have sacrificed her East and West India possessions, her own Islands, and Norway, because France might have threatened her with the loss of Jutland and Holstein? He defied the right honourable Secretary to shew on the table one syllable of evidence, that Denmark entertained such an intention. He had shaped other Resolutions, for the purpose of inquiring what had been the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers with respect to Denmark herself; and whether, having determined to pursue a course hostile to her interests, they had pursued a course advantageous to ours.

By what Ministers had done, they had provoked hostility without depriving the enemy of the power of revenge. If our army had been able to beat the Danes, as asserted the other evening by a noble lord, might we not have kept Zealand? With the assistance of Sweden and of our own

reinforcements, what chance would France and Denmark, united, have had, to get back this important possession? To abandon it was the height of weakness. But even if we had not kept Zealand, could we not have dismantled the arsenal and destroyed the docks? Could we not have blown up the Crown Batteries and Cronenberg Castle, and secured to ourselves the quiet passage of the Sound? Why so shabby in our iniquities? When we imitated the atrocities of the ruler of France, why not imitate the grandeur and magnitude of his designs? Would Buonaparte, under similar circumstances, have given up Zealand? The conduct of Ministers showed how weak it was to do ill by halves. If it was necessary to attack Denmark at all, then it was their duty to render her as inefficient as possible. The same motives that justified the one would justify the other. He presumed it was not want of will in the right honourable gentlemen opposite, but want of knowledge. He trusted at least that they would not talk of scruples, or morality, or law: these, according to the modern tenets, were considerations fit only for fools and philosophers, not for statesmen. Would they venture to contend, that it was no disadvantage to Great Britain to have the Sound shut against her commerce, to have Zealand created, what it certainly would be, a strong depository of force against her arms? Having begun the work of destruction, they neglected their duty by not completing it. Let them not say that he gave counsel so atrocious, so monstrous, that their delicacy and sensibility would not allow them to accept it.

Were Ministers, he would ask, disposed to put Ireland in a state of greater discontentment than that in which she was at present? If not, why leave Denmark so much power? Having alienated Denmark from England, France would construct in Copenhagen fleets much faster, better and cheaper, than in any other port of Europe. His Majesty's Ministers had expressed great solicitude for Sweden. A subsidiary treaty with Sweden was soon to be laid on the table of the House. France had long been the enemy of Sweden; Russia probably had become so. Denmark was rendered the ally of France, and thus by refraining from dismantling Zealand, Sweden was exposed to the greatest danger. All these considerations pressed with the greatest urgency for the fullest information on the subject. There did not appear to him the slightest justification of the conduct of Ministers with regard to Denmark. If they could justify themselves for the acts that they had committed, then they could not justify themselves for the acts that they had not committed. In commencing the war, in carrying on the war, in the mode of seeking for peace, in all, he thought them completely wrong, and on all, he demanded the fullest information.

He was anxious the character of the country should stand as fair as it always had done, and that it should not be made a reproach to us, that at the very time we were most vehement in condemning the atrocity of France, we went far beyond it. The right honourable gentleman concluded with moving his first Resolution: viz. "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, praying that he would

be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House, the substance and dates of all information transmitted by His Majesty's Minister at the Court of Copenhagen, during the last year, respecting the Naval Force of Denmark; and particularly respecting any measures taken for augmenting the same, or putting it in a state of better preparation, or for collecting seamen for the purpose of manning the same, or any part thereof."

Mr. Secretary Canning* then rose. He commenced his reply by observing, that the moment was at length arrived, when the gentlemen opposite, so peculiarly qualified by their own splendid achievements, to inquire into the conduct of their successors, had, by a worthy selection of the right honourable gentleman who had just sat down, put His Majesty's Ministers on their trial for that, which, until questioned by them, had been considered as the salvation of the country. In the greatness of his apprehension, lest all moral impressions should be effaced from the minds of the House, the right honourable gentleman had taken a course which afforded a brilliant example of a morality, not only out of the ordinary track, but more severe even than that Roman morality, which he knew had its admirers on the opposite bench. His Majesty's Ministers were called—not to account for disaster and disgrace; but to answer an accusation of success, and justify the motives of an eminent service. Whatever might be the decision of the House, he, for one, should always feel the highest satisfaction in having been so accused. It was also a source of peculiar gratification, that no imputation could rest on those

gentlemen by whom this motion was brought forward, of being actuated by party feelings, as had sometimes happened, when the successors of an administration had been left in possession of a glory, which they had tarnished. Envious feelings of comparison could not have instigated the present motion; as when nothing had been done by one set of men, it was impossible to find actions of theirs to compare with what had been done by another.

There was another feature in this transaction honourable to the character of the House: they were not then debating how to ward off impending danger, but, in comparative security, were discussing by what mode that security could be continued. According to the sentiments of the right honourable gentleman opposite, the restoration of the Danish fleet would be the best mode of continuing that security; for, certainly, if it were decided that the taking of them was unjust, the justice of retaining them could not possibly be maintained. The House could not blame the spoilers, and yet keep the spoil. Though he could not agree with the right honourable gentleman in his conclusion, he agreed with him in his premises, that if injustice had been done, it should be not only marked but repaired.

The right honourable gentleman had fairly stated, that the disposition of Denmark and Russia, and the means of France, constituted the question before the House. He had admitted the designs of France, without any other evidence than that contained in His Majesty's speech. With respect to the disposition of Denmark, he begged the right honourable gentleman to recollect, at the outset, that it was

not asserted by His Majesty's Ministers, that wilfully, knowingly, and of choice, Denmark had been desirous of war with Great Britain rather than of peace. This had neither been maintained, nor was it necessary to be so:—indeed, a right honourable friend of his, on the opposite side of the House (Mr. Sheridan), had said, on a late evening, that a case of weakness on the part of Denmark, and of a determination to avail herself of that weakness on the part of France, would alone be a justification of the conduct of the British Government. But though he did not impute to Denmark a disposition to go to war with this country, he protested against the advantage which was taken of this admission, when it was asserted, that we had had the hearts of the Danes, and that we had forfeited them. He did not like talking of national dislikes; but such an observation evinced a most complete blindness to the fact, that from the moment of the Armed Neutrality, in 1780, there had been a feeling towards this country, on the part of Denmark, if not of direct hostility, certainly not of very cordial friendship.

Every body knew what had been the conduct of Denmark at the end of two former wars. In inciting the Armed Neutrality of 1780, Denmark had been an active agent; and at the end of 1800, but a few months after Denmark had declared her abandonment of the principles on which the Armed Neutrality was formed, she again entered into a league confederated against Great Britain. Did this testify the good intentions of Denmark? Or, on the other hand, did it testify her means of resisting the influence of superior Powers? Let whichever part of

the alternative the House chose be adopted, he would not hesitate to say, that any Government would be lost to a due sense of the interests of the country, if, with a recollection of former occurrences, they had not looked with vigilance and suspicion to see how Denmark would conduct herself at a period of so much greater danger to Great Britain. Was it not probable that a league of much more force, and knit with much greater vigour than any preceding one, would be formed against this country? Was it not probable, from the experience of the past, that Denmark would be induced by inclination, or compelled by force, to join that league? The favourite project of Buonaparte, since he had desisted from his threat of immediate invasion, was to destroy our commerce, and to collect a naval force which should run down the navy of Great Britain. Not a treaty did he conclude in which the exclusion of British merchandise and shipping did not form a leading article. In terms too plain to be mistaken, he had avowed his intention to bring every power of the Continent to act against Great Britain. Was there any thing in the situation of Denmark which rendered it probable that she was out of his view in this avowal? To all these presumptions the right honourable gentleman had thought it sufficient to answer, that Denmark had prepared against any attempt on the part of France, to controul her conduct, by stationing a military force in Holstein. What was the history of that force? The greatest danger to which Denmark was exposed from France was in 1803, when France occupied Hanover with a large force. Then not a

man was in Holstein beyond the peace garrison. Did the boasted cordon of Holstein remain in this state until the period when France seemed disposed to molest Denmark? No—only until the armies of England and Sweden were in force in Hanover; then, and not till then, the Danes increased their military power in Holstein. He must be an ingenious arguer who could deduce from this circumstance that England had been the object of the sympathy of Denmark, and France of her apprehension. After the battle of Jena the territory of Denmark had been violated by a French detachment in pursuit of a Prussian corps, and a slight skirmish took place with the Danish troops, in which a Danish general was taken, and conveyed to the head-quarters of the French general, where, in place of being treated with the distinction to be expected from an officer of a friendly power, he met with no very flattering reception; and was sent back after his horse had been stolen, and his pockets picked, under every species of injury which a licentious soldiery could inflict. This had been done whilst the Danish army, collected to cover the neutrality of Holstein, was stationed in the neighbourhood. Was this event followed by the advance of that army? No such thing; the insult was immediately succeeded by the retreat of the Danish army; and this circumstance produced a remonstrance on the part of the British Government, against the conduct of the Danish Government, in neglecting to vindicate its neutrality. The mention of this circumstance led him to contradict a misrepresentation which had been charged against the British Government, namely,

that the Danish army had been stationed in Holstein at its desire, in order that its designs against Copenhagen might be more easily accomplished. This statement was so wholly unfounded, that it was not till the retreat of the Danish army, before a handful of French troops, that the British Government had made a representation, complaining that that was not the way for Denmark to enforce its neutrality.

The conduct of France to Sweden was very different. When the French division, commanded by General Murat, entered Lubeck, two thousand Swedish troops were made prisoners, after the storming of the town, and the general who commanded them, was not only treated with every distinction due to his rank and character, but sent back with a message to the King of Sweden from the French General, the brother-in-law of Buonaparte, inviting him to make common cause with France, intimating that it would be for his advantage to do so, and hinting that it was unnatural for Denmark to possess Norway, which ought to be annexed to Sweden. This had been the conduct of France towards Sweden, at a period contemporary with the assertion of the Danish neutrality; and when afterwards a negociation was entered into at Hamburgh, for the release of the Swedish prisoners, the same communication was made to the Swedish *chargé d'affaires* there. What was the conduct of the King of Sweden upon this occasion? He sent immediately to acquaint the Crown Prince with the offer that had been made to him, and proffered the assistance of twenty thousand Swedish troops

for the defence of Denmark, an assistance which the British Government also had strongly recommended to the acceptance of the Government of Denmark. This offer, thus recommended on our part, had been rejected by the Danish Government, which, in communicating the terms of the offer, concealed entirely the proposal of France respecting Norway. Could the right honourable gentleman then contend, that after such conduct, we had a right to rely on the frank and full declaration of Denmark? Shortly after, Hamburgh was evacuated by the French, but re-occupied on the 19th November, only two days before the famous Decree of the 21st November. This Decree was communicated to the Danish Government, and no remonstrance was made against it; yet, when the mitigated measure of retaliation was afterwards resorted to by the British Government, then the rage of the Danish Government was excited, and a determination to resist its execution declared. It was due, however, in justice to the noble lord who preceded him in office (Lord Howick), to state, that this determination had been manfully met; which led to its abandonment. He did not mean to insist on this as conclusive, though it amounted to a strong presumption that, whether from predilection or necessity, the Danish Government had no power of election between England and France; there was no choice, no discussion, no reasoning upon the subject.

The magistrates of Hamburgh had remonstrated against the decree of the 21st of November, and sent a deputation to wait upon Buonaparte with it. In the conference which

the deputies had with Buonaparte, they represented to him the ruin of commerce that would be the consequence of pursuing his wild plan of restrictions; to which his answer was, "that he would annihilate all commerce; for, as commerce "and England were identified, and he was determined that "England should fall, it was necessary that commerce "should fall also." But he did not stop there; he added, "that he would make others co-operate with him;" and then adverting to this mighty neutral, this powerful independent state, he said, "let that little Prince take "care, or I shall teach him how to act." This was not a private communication, but a statement in a conference which had since been published. What was it that Buonaparte was to teach the Crown Prince of Denmark, to whom he directed such an insulting observation as no one individual could address to another without offence, except the manner of making his means subservient to the views of the French Government? When the French shut the Elbe and the Weser, the Danish Government consented to the measure without a murmur, but remonstrated strongly against our blockade of those rivers, though the remonstrance was afterwards given up, when it was found that it would be injurious to their own commerce to press their objections to the measure. That it was not the determination of the Danish Government to defend Holstein against the French, appeared evident from a variety of opinions, which he found recorded in his office. The right honourable gentleman had called for copies of correspondence to shew what was the immediate intention of Denmark; but

he must contend, that the concurrent opinions of several Ministers at different times, and under similar circumstances, were more to be depended upon as a ground of decision, than the opinion of any individual, however qualified he might be to form a correct judgment. [The right honourable secretary here read extracts from several despatches from Mr. Garlicke, dated Copenhagen, December 1806, stating, that, after the French Decree of the 21st November had been communicated to the Danish Government, a demand was made that the Danish army should be withdrawn from Holstein; that no English or Swedish troops should be allowed to enter the Danish territory, nor any measures taken demonstrative of distrust of France; that on receipt of this intelligence at Kiel, relays of horses had been provided, not for the advance, but to secure the retreat of the Crown Prince. He also read from a subsequent despatch, dated 28th December, 1806, that no preparations for defence had been made, nor any inclination shewn to resort to the aid of the natural allies of Denmark; that several persons employed in the offices of state, though not in the highest department, acted in collusion with France, and were attached to the French interests; that these persons would have considerable influence on the opinions respecting the defence of the country; and that, viewing the indolence of some, and the activity of others, at the Danish Court, he (Mr. Garlicke) thought it his duty to state the truth, that there was reason to conclude that when France was in an attitude to enforce her demand, she would insist upon the exclusion of British

vessels from the ports of Denmark, and probably afterwards upon the surrender of the dock yards of Copenhagen; and that it was therefore the more necessary for the British Government to use every means of vigilance and precaution, to defeat the designs of the enemy in that quarter.]

These had been the opinions of that Minister upon the policy and temper of the Danish Government: and yet that was the Power upon whose determination they were required implicitly to rely. It would not be just for him, in stating these facts, to withhold his tribute of applause from those who had preceded him in the office he had now the honour to fill, and who had met with firmness the remonstrances and demonstrations of the Danish Government. The noble lord who immediately preceded him had instructed Mr. Garlicke to declare to the Danish Government, that His Majesty could never, in the event of that power submitting to the controul of France, suffer either the whole or a part of its navy to be placed at the disposal of France. (Loud cries of hear, hear!) The honourable gentlemen opposite might continue their acclamations, but the opinion was entitled to respect. Perhaps, however, the noble lord had not considered the means adequate to the end, and did not look upon the capture of Holstein as more likely to secure the possession of the Danish fleet, than the conquest of Alexandria that of the Turks. But the instructions of the noble lord went on to say, that if the Danes should suffer the French to occupy Holstein, His Majesty could not abstain from those measures which would be necessary

to maintain the honour of his crown and assert the interest of his subjects. (Loud cries of hear, hear! from the opposition.)

He presumed, from their acclamations, that the gentlemen opposite inferred, that these measures should not be resorted to until the Danish navy should be actually taken, or until the agreement should be entered into for its surrender, or until a communication of such agreement should be made by a government, which had entered into a convention with this country in August, and in the December following had violated that convention. The whole conduct of that court shewed, that, either from necessity or inclination, it would have taken a part against this country, and it was no weak presumption of such an event, that all the offers of France had been kept back from this country, whilst they were amusing us with the assurance, that they placed an implicit reliance upon the Declarations of France.

He had been hitherto speaking of the state of Denmark in December 1807, and January 1808, when Buonaparte was employed at a distance in Poland, against armies, certainly not equal to his own, but which kept him at bay, and by a small assistance might have been rendered equal to his armies. By what means could Denmark defend herself against the French, when Buonaparte should return with his whole force triumphant from Poland, after she had refused the assistance that had been offered to her? Of all persons he did not think that His Majesty's Ministers should be accused of injustice by the captors of Alexandria; of mismanagement by the attackers of the Dardanelles; as

inglorious by the conquerors of Constantinople? But though he should admit that the demand of the Danish navy was a strong measure, yet there was some extenuation in that case, which did not apply to the demand of the Turkish fleet. He did not mean to argue here the difference of the necessity in either instance. There was this circumstance which bore upon the case of the Danish navy, that the Danish Government, contemplating the dangers that were gathering round it, had entertained the project of reducing its navy by sale, and he had it upon authority to state, that the Russian Minister had actually entered into a treaty for the purchase of part of the Danish navy. As to the influence of national pride, therefore, it could not be very active, for he could not conceive any situation that this country could be placed in, in which she could entertain a proposal for the disposal, by sale, of any part of the British navy. This would not certainly justify the demand of the Danish fleet; but it certainly did strip the right honourable gentleman's speech of part of its gorgeous eloquence. The experience of the past had enabled His Majesty's Ministers to judge of the conduct that would be pursued by Denmark. Had she not received intimation of the dangers that impended over her? Had not the bulletin, published by Buonaparte after the battle of Friedland, given her notice of her approaching fate, when it stated, "that the blockade of the British islands would then cease to be a vain word." What ports but those of Denmark could this prospective threat apply to, for what others were neutral? The conferences, too, at Tilsit, and the

immediate execution of some of the arrangements entered into there, by the restoration of the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, for whom the Emperor of Russia had particularly interested himself, on the condition of shutting their ports against Great Britain, shewed the designs of Buonaparte, and pointed to Denmark as the next state that would be called upon to submit to his laws of blockade. To Denmark alone this intimation of the Bulletin referred, and accordingly she was found shrinking into her shell as France approached, and neglecting to make any addition to her means of defence. She had declared the French Decree of the 21st November innocent, whilst she remonstrated strongly against the British mild retaliation in the Order of the 7th of January as unjust: and yet this was the power which they were told was capable of defending itself against France! The proposition was not maintainable, and if His Majesty's Ministers had not acted upon the impressions they received from the experience of the past, and their knowledge of the state and sentiments of the court of Denmark, they would not have done their duty. If they had not taken the very steps which were now censured, the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman was cold and dead, compared with the thunder that would have then rolled over their heads. But these were distant warnings. Had not Denmark more immediate intimation of its danger? General Bernadotte, on coming to take the command at Hamburgh, directed the assembled burghers to prepare quarters for fifteen thousand men, which he represented as only the advanced guard of a much greater

force, that was to be employed on an expedition which would not require him to be long absent from Hamburgh. Whither could this expedition be directed but against Holstein? Bernadotte had also been charged with a mission to the Crown Prince at Kiel; and, though he should state as a fact, a thing which he did not know upon official authority, that officer, he was assured, had had an interview with the Crown Prince at Kiel, on the night of the 21st of July. He believed the fact, though he could not state it positively, and he knew also, that it was believed at Kiel, in Holstein, at Hamburgh, and at St. Petersburgh, at the time. Bernadotte, too, had made no secret of the object of his mission, being to procure the exclusion of the English from the ports of Denmark. Was this a state of things, in which His Majesty's Ministers were to go on confiding in the sincerity and means of the Danish Government, till they should be called on for assistance? He wished to know, why they should have waited for the Declaration of Denmark, when fully apprised of the disposition of France towards that power, of the inability of Russia to controul that disposition, and of the want of means, or of inclination, on the part of Denmark, to resist the force of France?

But the right honourable gentleman had argued that though there had been enough in the circumstances and conduct of Denmark to excite suspicion, or call for measures of precaution, yet there was not sufficient to justify the length to which the measures of His Majesty's Government had been carried. For himself, he did not know what other measures could have been resorted

to; and he would defy the ingenuity of the gentlemen opposite, to shew what others could have been adopted, that would have insured the accomplishment of the object. It was not necessary for him, in this instance, to say that the whole of the force employed on this occasion, had not been provided for this expedition originally. A very large part of it had been employed to assist the King of Sweden, the remainder had been provided on principles of precaution; and, as the influx of intelligence demonstrated the critical nature of the emergency, or, as the views of France developed themselves, it became the more necessary to employ the whole upon this important service. As to the demand of the fleet, he was at issue with the right honourable gentleman; but as he meant to object to the production of the papers he called for, he thought it right to state, that the proposition intended to have been made in the first instance to the Court of Denmark, was to surrender its fleet in deposit, to be returned on the conclusion of peace. This proposition had not been submitted to the Danish Government, because the gentleman who was the bearer of it, on his arrival at Kiel, felt confident that he should see the Prince on the following morning, but found in the morning that the Prince had set out for Copenhagen; on following the Prince to Copenhagen he found he had returned to Kiel. The Danish Minister whom he met at Copenhagen, had orders not to treat upon the terms he was authorized to propose: the Minister at Kiel could not treat till the return of a courier from Copenhagen; the Minister at Copenhagen could not open a negociation till the return

of a messenger from Kiel. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to enter into any negociation that could hold out any prospect of a speedy or satisfactory result, and thus it was that the original proposition had never been submitted to the Danish Government. A sufficient force had been sent to justify the Court of Denmark to France in conceding to our demand, or, if it did not concede, to accomplish the object for which it had been dispatched.

As to the violated dignity of the Danish nation, the very display of our force before Copenhagen might be considered a violation of that dignity. If one of our cruisers had searched a single Danish ship, or stopped a corporal's guard going to Zealand, this might also be called an attack upon that nation; and upon this subject he should quote a great authority upon the law of nations, which he held in his hand. That great modern expositor of the law of nations, whom the right honourable gentleman, in the religious part of his speech, seemed to consider as a special instrument in the hands of Providence—Buonaparte—who, in his tender concern for the interests of this country, always took care to give an exposition of his sentiments at a time when it would bear on a parliamentary debate—had given, in a Moniteur which arrived this very day, a sufficient proof of what would have made him consider Denmark as in a state of hostility with France. When the Austrian Minister, Stahremberg, was re-called, he was particularly ordered to leave London by the 20th, as Parliament were to meet on the 21st: and a Moniteur which had arrived this very day, had given an exposition of Buona-

parte's sentiments with respect to neutrals. In the justification of the conduct of France towards Portugal, one of Buonaparte's Ministers says in his official report, "If any sovereign in Europe should allow his territory to be violated by the English, the act would clearly place that sovereign in hostility with your Majesty; and, therefore, if the Portuguese have suffered their vessels to be violated by the cruisers of that Power, they, too, were in hostility with your Majesty." Now, those who thought so much of the wounded pride of Denmark, should consider, that upon this principle, the search of the smallest vessel, in crossing the Belt, would be sufficient to place Denmark in a state of war with France. With a French army on the frontiers of Holstein, and no English fleet or force off Copenhagen, it would be an idle waste of words, a mere mockery of negociation, to enter into any discussions. Humanity, as well as policy, required a force large enough for the ultimate accomplishment of the object under any circumstances. No man could blame His Majesty's Ministers for having made the force much larger than was necessary for either object, in order to invite the surrender of the fleet which was required; but, when no proposition would be listened to, it was satisfactory that the means employed were sufficient for the accomplishment of the object with the least possible loss.

The right honourable gentleman had said that the case could only be justified by necessity; but he was sure the right honourable gentleman must carry his principle further, and admit, that the measure ought not to be carried beyond the necessity of the case. He was therefore sur-

prised to hear the right honourable gentleman say, at the conclusion of his speech, that the measure ought to have been pushed to extremity. By other premises he might arrive at that conclusion, but certainly not from those he had that night stated. The right honourable gentleman had said, that the Danish Government could defend the islands against France, though France should be in possession of Holstein. But if the Danish navy was not prepared against England, neither could it be prepared against France. However, the fact was, and it was notorious, that after Zealand had surrendered, many Danish troops had succeeded in getting into that island, notwithstanding the judicious distribution of the British naval force in the Belts, by the very able officer who commanded in that quarter. On the authority of his predecessor he could state, that the pressure in Holstein was considered as likely to lead to the surrender of Zealand. The right honourable gentleman had asked, why they had not put their questions directly to Russia, respecting her conduct? He would answer, that they had flattered themselves, that by pursuing a course rather conciliatory, they might bring back Russia to the line of her true policy, and therefore they abstained from any conduct that might drive her irrecoverably into the arms of France. But the right honourable gentleman asked why, if Russia were a party against us, we ought not to have selected Russia for our attack? To this question, which had been so often put, the answer was so obvious that he was surprised to hear it repeated. If they had had certain information of the hostile intentions of Russia, and the object which they had in view were not attainable

by any other means, he agreed, that Russia should have been attacked. It had been shewn, that the object sought from Denmark could not have been obtained without a prompt and peremptory force, and that that object was of the highest moment to the security of this country. An attack upon Cronstadt might have been productive of glory, but would not have diminished the maritime means that could be employed against us, and which constituted our danger. Would it then have been wise, or politic, or safe, to have passed the harbour of Copenhagen, which contained twenty sail of the line, that would instantly become the instruments of the enemy's vengeance against us, in order to execute a barren bravado against Cronstadt, where we could obtain but three or four rotten hulks? It was true, he admitted, that Russian ships of the line had passed through our fleets, and we had the choice of attacking them; but, aware of the circumstances by which the Emperor had been rendered the friend of France, of the disgusting humiliations to which he had been subjected at the conferences of Tilsit, and hoping that his magnanimous spirit might still be driven to resistance and aggression, His Majesty's Ministers had still cherished the hope that the Emperor Alexander would retrace his steps, not for the purpose of a renewal of war with France—God forbid!—but in order to consult the true interests of his empire. In the present circumstances of the world, a war with France would be hopeless; but it was not hopeless that the spirit and disposition of his people might bring him back to better councils. They had strong grounds to know that the intentions

of Russia were hostile, but, in the most inauspicious moment, they were not without expectations of altering them.

The right honourable gentleman had contended that this prospect was not improved by calling upon Russia to sanction the business of Copenhagen; but it was somewhat strange, that such an opinion should be entertained by those who held that it was of no consequence whether a mediator was friendly or not. He could assure the right honourable gentleman, that the note of Baron Budberg. which he imputed to some French intelligence respecting the transactions at Copenhagen, was not produced by any such cause. The business at Copenhagen had been known at St. Petersburgh on the 22d July, a week before that note was written; and if gentlemen reflected that General Savary dictated to the Emperor of Russia in his capital, they might easily account for the asperity of any note which might have been submitted to his inspection. All accounts agreed in representing, that the mind of the court of Russia was alienated from this country, and one might easily conceive a reason for that alienation. The expectation of assistance from this country, no matter whether well or ill founded, was the cause, not of the peace of Tilsit, but of the temper in which it was concluded, when the military disasters had rendered that peace necessary. Out of twenty despatches received from our Ambassador with the Emperor, there was not one in which he did not say, "Send assistance, or Russia will fail you; make a diversion, which will take part of the weight of war off Russia, or she will withdraw from it."

As to the charge, that the expedition to Copenhagen

was the cause of the hostility of Russia, he contended, on the authority of our Ambassador at Petersburgh, that the fact was not so; but he could also refer to the authority of another noble person, who had an ample opportunity of knowing the truth of what he here advanced, and he should do this with the more satisfaction, because of some rumours he had heard, that that noble person (Lord Hutchinson) had declared an opinion since his return to this country, that the Expedition to Copenhagen was the cause of the hostility of Russia. The right honourable secretary here read an extract from a despatch from Lord Hutchinson, dated Memel, 20th of July, and stating that there were many secret articles in the treaty of Tilsit; that the predominant party in the Russian court was French, but that the rational part of the nation was against a war with England; that it was probable the secret articles related to Turkey, and to the shutting of the Russian ports against England, in the event of the failure of a negociation within a limited time. This extract would be sufficient to do away any impression that the rumours to which he alluded might have made, as if the noble writer of the despatch really attributed the hostility of Russia to the business at Copenhagen. Hoping for a change of circumstances, they had thought it better to afford to the Russian Government an opportunity of releasing itself from the embarrassing engagements into which it had unfortunately entered at Tilsit; and when he considered the nature of the policy and practice of that court, when he contemplated the anxiety which it had

always manifested to maintain its rank as Protector of the North of Europe, and the tenacity with which it still fondly wished to cling to that character, he could not suppose a case in which every feeling of its pride and ambition could be so completely gratified as in the submission of our differences with Denmark to the mediation of Russia as arbitress of the North. She could thus say to herself, the sea of which I am protectress has been violated; but those who have violated it are placed in my hands, subject to my mediation. This was the light in which he was confident the application to Russia to mediate, would be considered by every person who was a friend to the true interests of Russia, and it was so considered, until the overbearing influence of General Savary altered the tone of the Russian Cabinet. But it had been said, why not attack Cronstadt, and insult the Emperor in his own capital? There was a great party, or rather the majority of the bettermost people in Russia, who were anxious for British connection; but whatever might be the partialities of such persons, they must all feel for the honour and glory of their country, and therefore it could not be desirable to destroy, by an unprofitable attack upon the national feelings, the nascent popularity of this country. We had the right unquestionably; but it was a different question, whether, under the circumstances of the case, we ought to exercise it: besides, the object was not worth the cost and pain of the undertaking, and the execution of it would have infallibly disgusted those who would be likely to bring back Russia to her real interests. Those gentlemen who admitted that a

knowledge of the designs of France, and of the weakness of Denmark, would justify the expedition, seemed to forget the inadmission, and to urge the broad principles applicable to a different state of things. It was undoubtedly just, that if there were a community of states in Europe, the weaker states ought to be as secure from aggression, as the more powerful ones. This was a principle which had never been denied. But gentlemen wrongly applied to the existing state of Europe this principle, which properly belonged to that state of Europe, in which the rights of all were secured by the sanctity of public law ; and even the weakest were preserved from aggression or insult—if not by immediate protection, at least by conflicting interests.

In the enthusiasm of the right honourable gentleman's morality, it was rather strange, that he should have forgotten the moralities of the French revolution. In the present state of the world, whatever miseries might be produced, whatever calamities endured, whatever atrocities committed, by the permission of that Providence in whom we live, breathe, and have our being, the whole responsibility must rest upon him, who is the sole author of them. There was not now a community of states in Europe, connected by the solemnity and sanction of public law, protecting and protected by the influence of the principles of equal justice, and a mutual sense of reciprocal rights; there was but one devouring state, that swallowed up every one that it could bring within its grasp, and that, so far from respecting the rights and independence of other nations, reduced all to indiscriminate sub-

jection, rendering them alike subservient to the designs of its Ruler against this country. Buonaparte now dictated to all the nations of the continent, and had erased every vestige of public law in Europe. He could not but be surprised then, to find gentlemen censuring a measure, which had proved the salvation of the country, and comparing it with antiquated crimes in which we had no share, and for which we had incurred no responsibility.

Was it to be contended, that in a moment of imminent danger, we should have abstained from that course which prudence and policy dictated, in order to meet and avert those calamities that threatened our security and existence, because if we sunk under the pressure, we should have the consolation of having the authority of Puffendorf to plead? But the conduct that had been adopted on this occasion, was not without precedent or example. In the year 1801, the island of Madeira had been taken possession of by our Government, for fear it should fall into the hands of the French. Yet Portugal was a neutral nation, and had always, by way of pre-eminence, been styled the old and ancient ally of England. The capture of Madeira had been effected without any previous communication to the Court of Lisbon. Undoubtedly, instructions had been sent to our Minister at the Court of Lisbon, to request that an order should be sent to the Governor to surrender the island in good will. The instructions arrived at Lisbon about the time that the troops arrived at Madeira, and the island was consequently

taken by force before any orders could have been sent out to surrender it. Where had Portugal at that time a fleet that could convey troops for the invasion of these islands, or if she had that fleet, what expedition could be sent by her that would not be defeated by the valour and intrepidity of our seamen? He did not mean to condemn the capture of that island, because he knew that it might be, and he had no doubt that it was, justifiable upon the grounds of probable necessity; he adverted to the transaction only as a defence against the generality of the charge. But this was not the only instance in which such conduct had been practised to neutral states, in which it had been used towards neutral and friendly powers; nay, even there was an instance in which it had been adopted by morality itself towards a friendly state. In the year 1806, there had been reports of its being the intention of the French Government to invade Portugal. He had himself no doubt of the perpetual intention of the French Government to prosecute that purpose, and he did not question that the design might have been in contemplation at that time; but it did not appear that any army was assembled for the purpose at Bayonne. He admired the conduct which had been adopted by the late Ministers on the occasion, he applauded their spirit, and he felt gratitude for the manner in which their proceeding enabled him to meet the general question on this charge. [Here the right honourable Secretary read an extract from the Instructions given by the late Board of Admiralty to Earl St. Vincent, when dispatched to Lisbon. The Instructions directed the noble Admiral's attention to

three objects; first, if the Portuguese Government should, by itself, or in conjunction with Spain, be disposed to defend the country against the French, to promise all the assistance that Great Britain could afford, and the presence of a respectable naval force in the Tagus would contribute to that object; secondly, if that should not be the determination of the Court, and the Government should embrace the resolution of emigrating to the Brazils, as it had once proposed during the late war, to offer them the assistance of a British naval force, under the protection of which alone, that determination could be carried into effect; and, lastly, if there should not be vigour enough in the Government to adopt either of these resolutions, he was to prevent, if possible, the port of Lisbon from falling into the hands of the French, and, at all events, the Portuguese navy was to be secured; every vessel of which that was serviceable, was to be brought off, together with the ships, goods, and persons of the British factory at Lisbon, and also the court, if it should be so disposed: for the execution of these instructions, the troops that were then embarking were to be sent to him with all convenient expedition; but he was not to give any intimation of the circumstance to the Portuguese Government, nor to hold any language that might excite the suspicion of the French Minister, or lead to any measures of precaution; and, as it might be necessary to employ the troops immediately on their arrival, in order to secure a strong position, he was to have the marines and boats of the fleet constantly in readiness for that service.] These instructions were clear in their tenor,

precise in their object, and conclusive as to the question then under consideration. If any gentleman wished for the document, it would be laid on the table, and the only shyness that had been felt in producing it before was, that it would place him and his colleagues in the situation of convicted plagiarists. (Hear, hear!) These were the instructions that had been given by morality itself, and the only difference between them and the instructions that had been given by the present Government was, that the latter did not desire that the army should be introduced in disguise.

But there might yet be one qualification that the right honourable gentleman would apply to Denmark, namely, that her conduct, when she was relatively strong to weaker neutral states, did not merit such a measure against her. What had that conduct been? When, in 1801, the maritime confederacy held out a prospect that this country would not be able to protect its allies, Denmark treated the unprotected neutral state of Hamburgh with the most violent oppression, and did so for the purpose of excluding the English from that port. The same conduct had been pursued towards Ratzburg. This conduct proved that Denmark had no very strong claims for forbearance. But it was rather strange, that those gentlemen who blamed Government for not having accepted the mediation of Russia, should now impute it as a ground of charge that they had not passed by Copenhagen in order to attack Cronstadt. We had the right to attack Russia, but had we no interest in forbearing to exercise that right? There were, at the

time, in the ports of Russia, five hundred British ships, and six thousand British seamen; and gentlemen would perceive, that these formed too important an object to be hazarded for the sake of the few hulks that might be obtained at Cronstadt: besides, the fleet which Russia had in the Mediterranean was a security to us for her good behaviour. And here he would take occasion to contradict a misrepresentation that had taken place upon the subject of this fleet. The Russian squadron did not enter the Tagus by order from the Government, but from sheer distress, and because all the ports of the enemy were so closely blockaded by our squadrons, that they could not enter any one of them. This squadron was first directed to touch at a British port, and even the Russian Ambassador was so deceived with respect to it, that he had kept here a frigate with specie on board for the payment of that very fleet. But, if that fleet had been attacked, what an argument might yet be drawn against the precipitancy of such a measure, from the circumstance of the squadron having been directed to touch at a British port, and the Russian Ambassador having detained the frigate with the specie for the pay of the crews!

He had intentionally avoided referring to any thing in this debate but what was notorious; and if they were to ask why they had rested their defence upon precise information, when the events and facts that had since taken place, had amply justified their measure, he would answer, that they had stated that precise ground because it was true, and not because they thought it necessary to their

justification in judging of the case before the House. If any more evidence should be thought necessary, let them be condemned, for nothing should ever extort from them the source whence they had derived their information. If gentlemen should say, that this course was contrary to the practice of Parliament, he would go to the Journals, to prove that it was not out of the usual course of Parliamentary proceedings. Having rescued the country from a great and imminent danger, he would trust to the case as it stood, and he had no doubt but that the conduct of Ministers would be judged deserving of approbation. The House might judge of the extent of the service performed by contemplating the distribution of our naval force, that might be necessary if the Danish fleet were not now in our possession.

As to what the right honourable gentleman had said of the increase of the danger of Sweden by the Expedition, he could assure him, that that danger was greatly diminished by that event, and so the Government of Sweden felt it. As the right honourable gentleman had alluded to a communication made by him to Mr. Rist, the Danish chargé d'affaires, he would briefly state the fact to the House. He had been commanded by His Majesty, after the Danish fleet had been surrendered, to make an official communication to that gentleman, desiring that he might procure powers from the Crown Prince to negociate an accommodation, or to procure passports for a Minister to go to Kiel for that purpose. This was all the official communication; he had, however, thought it right to in-

form Mr. Rist of the terms upon which the accommodation might be effected. He had mentioned then the period of three years, as that which might, after the conclusion of peace, enable us to form a judgment of the stability of the peace; and certainly, those who had witnessed the last peace must be sensible, that the period was not too long; for in eighteen months after that peace, we were as much at war as before. Considering that we had gained possession of the fleet by force, he did not think the stipulation of such a term any insult, and he had proposed either to keep the fleet in deposit, or to take it in purchase. When he communicated this fact to the House, he thought it necessary to state why he did not produce the papers. As all negociations were resumed on the terms upon which they had been last broken off, and though he and his colleagues had thought it right to make such offers in that instance, it would not follow that they should be disposed to grant the same conditions at a future period. In the hope of some such accommodation, His Majesty had even been induced to delay directing the condemnation of the Danish shipping, as well as his declaration of war. He had no hesitation to add, that every stipulation had been required that could be necessary for the security of the Swedish territory. But now that war had taken place, it could not be contended that the capture of the Danish Navy did not, *pro tanto*, diminish the means of the enemy, whilst it added to our means of security. Buonaparte well knew, that the maritime power of Great Britain was the only impediment to his universal aggrandisement. He would not cease,

therefore, to exhaust all the means he possessed to accomplish the grand object of his ambition. The trial he would make; and it was only by making it, and its failure, that he was to be convinced of the inefficiency and fruitlessness of all his designs. He would destroy all commerce in order to injure this country, which he identified with it:

> "Cedet et ipse mari vector: nec nautica pinus
> Mutabit merces."—

But though he should direct the whole accumulated force of his vast territories to this purpose, he would find all his projects frustrated, until he could make all nations independent of commerce, in consequence of their own productions:

> "Omnis feret omnia tellus."

By the expedition to Copenhagen, the means of the enemy had been reduced, and the security of the country augmented. Those who thought the policy of that measure weak, and its execution unjust, would certainly vote against him. But he could not consider it a manly way to take the division upon the motion for papers, and not on the merits of the question, merely because some few would vote for the papers, who would not support a motion for censure. Conscious of the principles upon which he and his colleagues had acted, and of the advantages resulting to the country therefrom, trusting to the justice and the good sense of the House, for a confirmation of the universal sentiment of the country with regard to the conduct of His

Majesty's Ministers upon the present transaction, he should submit to its decision, and meet the motion with a direct negative.

Mr. Wyndham supported the motion of Mr. Ponsonby; and after a very lengthened discussion, the House divided at half-past five on Thursday morning—

For Mr. Ponsonby's motion	108
Against it	253
Majority	145

EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN.

FEBRUARY 25th, 1808.

Mr. Sheridan concluded a speech, possessing the usual characteristics of his style of speaking—great eloquence and great humour—by moving the following resolutions:—

1. "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, as far as the same can be done without prejudice to the public service, copies or extracts of any correspondence which passed between His Majesty's Ministers and the Danish Chargé d'Affaires, or his Secretary, resident at the Court of London, from the date of the capitulation of Copenhagen, to their departure,

together with the minutes of any verbal communications between the same.

2. "Copies or extracts of all correspondence which passed, after the capitulation of Copenhagen, between His Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Stockholm, relative to the retaining possession of the Island of Zealand by a Swedish army, or in concert with His Majesty's forces; and also copies of any correspondence which may have passed between the Courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm relating to the same, and communicated to His Majesty's Minister residing at the Court of Stockholm."

Mr. Secretary Canning* was not ashamed to confess, that he at all times felt considerable difficulty in disagreeing from his right honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan); and that in this instance, his difficulty was much increased, not by the line of argument adopted by his right honourable friend, but by the humour with which he had treated subjects stated to be atrocious, and the gravity with which he had dwelt upon things trifling and unimportant. His right honourable friend had set out with a discussion of the particular benefits of the British Constitution, which he contrasted with the practice of despotic governments. But he had pushed this contrast to a greater extent than any writer or speaker with whom he was acquainted. His right honourable friend had said, that His

Majesty's Ministers were preserving the gloom of despotism upon every transaction, upon which they did not, shortly after the transaction took place, or whilst the consequences were yet flowing from it, give the fullest information to the House, and through that House to the public, and through the public to the enemy, by which the enemy might be enabled to defeat the objects of them. He had always thought that the Constitution had solved that problem which his right honourable friend seemed to think insoluble, by enabling that House to steer between difficulties, and by uniting the promptness of the executive with the salutary corrective of its popular branch. But the extremity to which his right honourable friend had pushed his proposition was not to be maintained in argument or in fact, and the former of his motions allowed the principle which the whole tenor of his speech went to invalidate. His right honourable friend had complained of the sparingness with which His Majesty's Ministers granted papers; but he was sure his right honourable friend must be convinced that papers had been laid upon the table this session in greater masses than upon any former occasion. It began to be the feeling of the House, that he and his colleagues had granted too many papers, and that the few which remained in the public offices should be retained there, if not for the guidance of future ministers, at least for the service of future oppositions. His right honourable friend had asserted, that because only extracts had been laid before the House, they were not entitled to credit; and that the remainder of

the documents, if produced, would contradict the tenor of the parts given to the public; as well as that, because chasms existed in the chain of papers, those which were forthcoming were not to be credited. The instance which his right honourable friend had selected to prove a deception in the case of the three despatches from Lord G. L. Gower, and upon which he dwelt with so much earnestness, as if they might have been written at intervals of some weeks, was rather an unfortunate one for his argument; because he had antecedently proved in his speech that they must all have been written between the 30th of August and the 2d of September. The clerical error of the copying clerk, in dating one of these despatches the 2d instead of the 1st of September, was the ground upon which his right honourable friend built his argument, to prove the deception which he imputed to His Majesty's Ministers.

But in contending that these despatches were framed with a view to justify His Majesty's Declaration of December 19th, which was issued in answer to the Emperor of Russia's Declaration of October 26th, which had been received in this country on the 3d of December, his right honourable friend gave credit to him and his colleagues for a portion of political sagacity which he was not, on other occasions, disposed to allow them. But as the observation had been applied not only to the despatches from Lord G. L. Gower, but to his answer to these despatches, dated September 17th, his right honourable friend

cut him short a fortnight of the allowance of political sagacity. The view which his right honourable friend had taken of the statement in Lord G. L. Gower's despatch, relative to the amicable tone assumed by General Budberg, was not maintainable in argument, or by the fact. Did his right honourable friend mean to say that General Budberg, at the time of adopting that tone, was not acquainted with the transactions at Copenhagen? If he did, he was mistaken; because these transactions had been known at St. Petersburg either on, or shortly after, the 20th of August. If that were so, he would ask his right honourable friend whether, under such circumstances, he would not think it proper to take advantage of such a disposition, in order, if possible, to preserve the relations of amity and alliance which had previously subsisted between the two countries? The note demanding an explanation of the attack upon Copenhagen, had been communicated under the influence of a power which had since acquired and exerted an ascendancy in the Russian councils. Though the despatches communicating this note had been received with the other, they did not seem to His Majesty's Ministers sufficient to alter the view which they had of turning to advantage, if possible, the friendly disposition which had appeared on the part of Russia. If this had been the use which his right honourable friend made of the papers produced at the desire of his own friend, what credit would he have given to the despatches if they had been voluntarily laid upon the table by His Majesty's Ministers? Would

he not have said, that Ministers had produced them in order to make out their own case? But he should not then enter into the general question, until it should be regularly brought before the House, by the motion of the learned gentleman on Wednesday.

If his right honourable friend was prepared to contend that the question ought to be answered because it was put; or that, according to the daily practice of that House, it ought to be answered without any reference whatever to any particular course to be grounded upon it; he was of opinion that it would require somewhat more than the ingenuity of his right honourable friend to establish that point. If he understood his right honourable friend right, he had adverted to certain misconstructions which had been put upon what had fallen from him on a former occasion, as if he had made statements from documents in order to misrepresent the general tenor of their contents. Upon this particular point he should obsserve, that if other reasons did not interfere with the production of these documents, he could, for his part, have no objection to produce them; and on this occasion he trusted he should meet with the indulgence of the House, in adding a few words upon a subject so immediately personal to himself. If he were to look to himself alone, he should have no difficulty in producing the papers, which would take away all misconstructions upon the subject, and leave the learned gentleman, when he came to bring forward his motion, to discuss it upon the mere naked principle. His right honourable

friend had mis-stated the view in which he had used one of those papers which he had read. He had stated, that he (Mr. Canning) from Lord Howick's despatch, had imputed that the Danish Court was in collusion with France; but this was a mistake: he had only stated that from all the circumstances of Denmark's having retreated as the French advanced towards Holstein, there was reason to apprehend, if they got possession of Holstein, Denmark might dread their proceeding to do the same by Zealand, and that might be a means of drawing the Danish fleet into the hands of France; and he thought the noble lord had good cause for fearing that might be the case.

His right honourable friend, in one part of his speech, admitted, and, in the wording of his motion, had more strongly confirmed the admission, that it must be left to His Majesty's Ministers to say what particular papers ought to be laid before the House, and what would be inconvenient or dangerous so to do, and then called on him to say whether there would be any inconvenience in the production of the papers now moved for? To this he distinctly answered, yes, there would be the highest inconvenience. His right honourable friend had told them that we had but one ally in Europe, and that he was in the greatest danger. He argued that this danger would arise to Sweden, from having entered into a compact with this country relative to taking possession of Norway, and in return asked for the whole correspondence relating to that transaction.

His right honourable friend's belief with respect to that was founded on a few paragraphs in the Moniteur, which he brought down, threw on the table, and then called on Ministers for all the correspondence between them and their only ally; he thought, however, Ministers knew too well how to shew their value for their only ally, to comply with so unreasonable a request. He did not know how it was, but it seemed to him the Moniteur had been strangely favourable to the views of the honourable gentlemen opposite; for they no sooner began to be exhausted in topics of declamation against Ministers, and to shew symptoms of being languid and flat, than over popped a Moniteur with some agreeable information to cheer their drooping spirits, and to give them a fresh opportunity of calling for more papers, in doing which he thought his right honourable friend had, on the present occasion, shewn a voracious curiosity. If he would limit it to any information that could safely be laid before the House, he would be glad to oblige him as far as possible, to give him an opportunity of joining more effectually in the motion which the honourable and learned gentleman soon meant to move on the capitulation of Copenhagen. He assured the House, that in every respect that treaty had been complied with on our part. There had been a conference as to British property seized and detained prior to our taking possession of Zealand. A doubt having arisen whether the capitulation meant to confine it to Zealand only, or to the rest of the Danish territory, it was agreed to be sub-

mitted to the officers on both sides, who made the capitulation, and was determined against the English, and implicitly complied with. The same, as to hostilities by the declaration of war, which were not known at the time of the capitulation: every thing had been abided by, that was stipulated by the capitulation. His right honourable friend was also mistaken as to the offer of Norway to Sweden by France. It was Prince Murat, and not General Brune, that made the offer which Sweden communicated to Denmark, but which Denmark concealed from us. His right honourable friend seemed to think, that France might do as she pleased—might give away Norway with impunity, whilst we should be highly criminal in any such intention, let the state of warfare between us and Denmark be what it might. His last point, however, was, that we should not follow the example of the enemy. In that respect His Majesty had hitherto carried on a system of scrupulous forbearance. If his right honourable friend meant that we should not imitate his cruelties, oppressions, and unbounded aggressions, he would coincide with him; but if he meant that we should not follow him in every measure which might tend to put us on a perfect equality with him in carrying on the war, he must differ with him entirely. His right honourable friend had indulged the exuberant fancy of his classic mind, by giving garbled extracts from Latin poets by way of quotation, such as—"*Ridiculum acri quid vetat.*" If he was inclined to retort a quotation on his right honourable friend, it

would, he thought, be strictly allowable to him to say,—

"Arma virumque cano."——"Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

Buonaparte, whatever might be his cruelties, his oppressions, or his aggressions, had on all occasions scrupulously adhered to and protected those who had entered into alliance with him; he had never sacrificed an ally to any consideration, however pressing or important. Ministers were that night called on to give up the correspondence of our only ally, which could not fail of being attended with great inconvenience; and he would, therefore, so far follow the example of the enemy, as to adhere to our ally, and to refuse his assent to his right honourable friend's motion.

The House divided—

For the motion	85
Against it	184
Majority . . .	99

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS.

MARCH 4th, 1808.

Mr. Adam moved the following resolutions:

"That it appears to this House, that one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State did read to this House despatches, and parts of despatches, and other communications,

to and from the accredited Ministers of this country at foreign courts, relative to the subjects of their missions; and that he had stated and read other matters respecting the transactions of this country with foreign powers, none of which were then communicated to this House by His Majesty's commands, and some of which this House has determined to be unfit to be produced. 2. That such conduct is subversive of the ancient and approved usages of Parliament, is destructive of fair discussion and decision, and has a direct tendency to injure the public interest, by making the resolutions of this House proceed on inaccurate statements, which it cannot correct by reference to the documents from which those statements are made; or to force on the consideration of this House, papers, which, in its wisdom, it may deem unfit for public production. And further, That such conduct is contrary to the trust which is reposed by the Constitution in the confidential servants of the Crown."

Mr. Secretary Canning.—Sir, I rise with more confidence than I expected I should have done. When I considered the profound legal knowledge, the deep parliamentary research, the great experience, and the great eloquence of the honourable and learned gentleman, I feared that I should sink under the combination of all these acquirements. I expected something would have come from him which would have entirely

changed the nature of the question. If the honourable and learned gentleman is satisfied with his speech, I am no less so; for with whatever confidence he has delivered himself to the House, I can assure him he has entirely relieved me from the doubt and anxieties so natural to a person in my situation.

The honourable and learned gentleman, according to the tactics of accusation, has bestowed great part of his argument to prove that no advantage was to be taken of official situation, and that no information was to be communicated to Parliament but in a regular form, either by command of His Majesty, or in consequence of an address. If this principle were to be adopted in consequence of the honourable and learned gentleman's motion—if the doctrine were now to be laid down, that no Minister was to convey any information, except in that particular form—it would be impossible for the business of the country to go on. Where would the honourable and learned gentleman draw the line? Would he say, that to answer a question would be perfectly correct, but to receive voluntary intelligence would be inadmissible? But if communication, according to the practice which I am confident I will be able to prove before I sit down, had existed, were to be made, in what way was it to be done? Should it not be either in the way of summary, or by extract? The reasons for pre-

ferring the latter are obvious; and considering the candour with which, on all occasions, I have been treated by the gentlemen on the opposite side, I conclude they will not maintain that the extract was not correctly stated. The honourable and learned gentleman complained of the injury which the diplomatic character of some of his friends sustained by withholding some parts of the correspondence, and reading others. But has not that been always the case? In one part of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech I cordially concur. I join with him in condemning the practice which has prevailed of late years, of laying, upon every trifling occasion or petty provocation, voluminous and mischievous extracts before Parliament. It will afford me the highest satisfaction, if this or any other discussion will have the effect of checking a practice productive of such very great inconvenience. The honourable and learned gentleman, in the course of his profound Parliamentary research, could discover but two instances in which this practice, which he reprobated so severely, had prevailed; and both these, he thinks, are decisive against the practice, because the persons who resorted to it, met that censure, which it is the object of the honourable gentleman to heap upon me.

The first was the instance of the Duke of Newcastle, who was rebuked for reading an extract from a despatch. The next instance was that of

Lord Melville, who was reprimanded by Mr. Fox for an attempt of the same kind. And by whom was he rebuked? Was it by an impartial authority, holding the balance with an even hand, or by a zealous political opponent, engaged in a virulent political warfare, who would have taken the same advantage of Lord Melville that the honourable gentleman sought to take of him? But Mr. Pitt, it was said, abstained from the practice. Now, had the honourable gentleman searched the modern records with the same zeal he did the old Parliamentary Journals, he would have found this unconstitutional, this never-to-be-sufficiently-reprobated practice, sanctioned by the authority of that very person. I will produce an instance to shew that Mr. Pitt did not think the practice improper. In the debate which took place in the year 1800, on the overtures to France, the discussion principally turned on the pacific disposition of the administration. On that occasion, Mr. Pitt, in the course of one of the most splendid effusions of eloquence which he had ever poured forth in this House, gave first a general history of the measures of Government as far as respected their efforts to obtain peace, and, as a proof of their pacific disposition, took from his pocket an extract of a despatch written five years before to the Court of St. Petersburgh, and read it in his place.

What was the conduct of Mr. Fox on that occasion? Did he complain that Mr. Pitt violated the duties of his office. and broke in upon the forms of Parliament? No: he said that he had never before heard of the application to the Court of St. Petersburgh, and that he highly approved of the tone in which the document was written. There was no insinuation here of garbled extracts, for partial purposes. So much for one of the honourable gentleman's instances.

But it was not on that occasion only that an extract was read. It occurred in twenty debates during the last war. It may be proper, perhaps, for the honourable gentleman to endeavour to draw down the indignation of the House upon me by way of "*experimentum in corpore vili*;" and to check a system of which I am not the beginning but the end. I will give the honourable gentleman another instance. It is no later than the last year that Lord Howick came down to this House, and read, in angry debate, an extract of a letter from a noble friend of mine (Lord Castlereagh) to Lord Cathcart. This letter was taken from among the papers which the honourable gentleman was so anxious to impress on the House were state property, and could not be applied, without a gross breach of duty, to private purposes. And yet it is in favour of this noble lord that all these whimpering complaints are made.

I am not yet at the end of my instances. In 1804, when Mr. Pitt moved an inquiry into the conduct of the Board of Admiralty, I can recollect that a right honourable gentleman now in my eye (Mr. Tierney), who was not a Cabinet Minister, came forward and read masses of papers, which never would have come into his possession, in consequence of having any official controul over them. I can also recollect that a great constitutional lawyer (Mr. Adam), upon a motion respecting the grant of a pension to a Scotch judge, rose in his place and read a long extract from a letter, for the purpose of fixing upon the Duke of Portland the stigma of that transaction. A noble friend of mine (the Marquis of Titchfield) immediately went to Burlington House, and returned before the debate was concluded, with a flat negative to the honourable gentleman's assertion. What did the honourable and learned gentleman think of this instance? As to the motions which were rejected on the 3d of February, not one of them would have brought the letter to which the honourable gentleman alluded before the House. The motion on the 8th certainly would, and that I rejected, not on account of the public mischief likely to arise from its production: I refused it, because it was demanded upon a false assumption, namely, that of my having made a charge against Lord Howick. I afterwards

granted it in my own exculpation, to prove that the extract I read was supported by the context.

I will say a few words, with permission of the House, upon the resolutions as they apply to me. It is not for me to state what would have been the course for the honourable gentleman to have pursued; but I cannot help thinking, that it would have been more advisable for him to have adopted a prospective measure, than to have laid down the principle, and then applied it to me. Why did he not follow the example of Mr. Fox, call me to order, and not let me go on in error, when I read this offensive extract? Why did he not take notice of it at the time, aware as he was, by his own confession, of its impropriety, and not come down a month after, and make it a subject of accusation? The honourable gentleman in the resolutions that he has moved, laid down, in language more eloquent than accurate, the general principle, and then made a particular deduction from it. He made it a matter of charge and grave accusation, that I attempted to persuade the House to refuse a paper, an extract from which I had read. But did not the House refuse it, and was not the guilt therefore, if there was any, chargeable upon the House? The honourable gentleman deduced also, as a corollary from the premises in the first resolution, that I had committed a breach of trust. If I had done so, I could not be

prosecuted with too much vindictiveness; I would deserve those rebukes which the Duke of Newcastle received from Lord Lechmere, and Lord Melville from Mr. Fox. When Mr. Pitt read the despatch sent to St. Petersburgh, when Lord Howick read the letter of my noble friend to Lord Cathcart, when another right honourable gentleman read volumes of extracts from the records and correspondence of the Admiralty, there was no question on these occasions of breach of trust.

But, Sir, to conclude; to this charge of breach of trust and violation of official duty, I reply, that Ministers had His Majesty's confidence each in their several departments, and that that confidence implied they were to exercise their discretion either in using or withholding, except in consequence of his command or an address, any correspondence in their respective offices. If documents were to be produced on every occasion; if no information was to be communicated but in the manner stated by the honourable gentleman; the business of Parliament, and of this great, prosperous, and happy country, must stand still.

[The Right Honourable Secretary then stated, that as a high criminal charge was preferred against him, he should withdraw, and throw himself upon the judgment of the House. He withdrew accordingly, amidst loud cries of "question, question."]

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the previous question, on which question the House divided :

Ayes	168
Noes	67
Majority	101

ROMAN CATHOLIC PETITION.

MAY 25th, 1808.

Mr. Grattan, this day, in an eloquent speech, moved for a committee to take the Petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland into their consideration.

Mr. Secretary Canning* said that if he and his colleagues wished to go to a silent vote on this question, it was certainly not from any want of disposition to shew respect to the right honourable gentleman who had brought forward the business in so able, eloquent, and candid a manner, but rather from a perfect coincidence in some of the sentiments so eloquently impressed by the right honourable gentleman, and a desire to give the vote, he should feel it his duty to give, in the manner most consistent with the right honourable gentleman's recommendation. If His Majesty's Ministers saw no prospect of a successful issue

to the question before the House, and but mischief in the discussion, was it unreasonable that they should be willing to avoid the debate? Was that course of proceeding new to the honourable gentlemen opposite? Had they forgot, that when they themselves were in power, and, with the fair influence of Government, attempted to carry a measure somewhat connected with this subject, they did every thing in their power to prevent the agitation of this general question, which they now thought it impossible to defer a year, or a month, without infinite danger to the country? If it was not the mischief of an unsuccessful agitation of the question that they deprecated, what other motive could they have, except that of the meanest temporary and personal interest? If they would say that by considerations of fair and statesman-like prudence they were induced to put off the discussion, then he should be glad to know what there was now in the state of Europe to render it a more proper period for agitating the question? Though he sought that occasion with the same anxiety as the honourable gentlemen opposite, no such favourable circumstances occurred to him. He would now state why it was desirable to bring this question to as speedy a decision as possible. It was impossible not to agree with the right honourable mover, when he represented how desirable it would be in the present state of the world to put an end to civil dissension, and to establish perfect harmony and concord between all parties. But it was fair, at the same time, to consider the practicability of the good that was proposed; and admitting the advantages that would flow from the establishment

of unanimity at all times, to question whether that unanimity could in fact be attained. However desirable it was, that persons professing Christianity should be all unanimous, it was a melancholy truth to which the history of all times bore testimony, that dissensions always existed, and that often the greater the pains taken to reconcile them, the wider the breach became. He concurred in the wish to extinguish religious animosities, he wished they had never existed, but he could not shut his eyes to the evidence of facts, so as to indulge in the hope of a "consummation "so devoutly to be wished." It was not in the power even of speeches so wise, so eloquent, and so good, as that of the right honourable gentleman, to obtain this victory over the passions and prejudices of men. The attempt must be abortive. Thus, what in reflection was matter of justice, was to be deprecated in discussion, as likely to afford no good practical result. He wished the right honourable gentleman had confined what he had to say to the last branch of his speech. If the result of the debate should not be favourable to the proposition of referring the petition to the committee, it was at least desirable that nothing should pass in the debate that could tend to inflame those animosities which every one must be anxious to see extinguished. The right honourable gentleman must concur with him in thinking, that the line of conduct he pointed out, viz. an interchange of good offices, and the practice of mutual conciliation, would do more, in the first instance, to remove animosities, than any motion that could be brought forward in this House. Such instruction, enforced by the

weight of the right honourable gentleman's example, must be productive of the greatest practical good. The grounds on which the right honourable gentleman called for a committee, were precisely the same that were urged without success on a former occasion, and they had received no addition of strength since.

He could not look back to the recent decision on this point—the right honourable gentleman himself could not look back to it—without being convinced that an inoffensive refusal would produce less mischief than a reluctant and forced assent. Let any body who knew the state of the public mind in this country, say whether there was not a strong prevailing sentiment against further concessions to the Catholics? If this was founded in reason, it was not easily to be overcome; but if it was even founded only on prejudice, the right honourable gentleman was well aware that such prejudices did not sometimes yield to repeated attacks of reason, any more than the prejudices on the other side to penal laws. It would be of little value to have a majority for the measure in the House, if there was an inflamed majority against it out of the House. If there should be a disappointment in the present instance, there would be a consolation in reflecting that the object of the motion must ultimately, though gradually, prevail. The right honourable gentleman's speech was so happily constructed and directed, that whether his motion succeeded or failed, it must do eminent service. There was one principle of the right honourable gentleman, however, which must be received with some reserve. When the legislature limited by

law the share of political power to be held by any class of men, and it was proposed to repeal that limitation, the legislature was to judge of the propriety of complying with the proposition; and if more disorder would arise from the repeal than from the continuance of the limitation, it was right to continue it. He again recommended the soothing and conciliating system proposed by the right honourable gentleman; and trusted that more benefit would be obtained by sending back the petition without any irritating language, than even by referring it to the committee, by means of a violent and contentious majority. On these grounds, he should give his vote conscientiously against the motion, with this satisfaction, that nothing that had been hitherto said could be a bar to the claims of the petitioners in future.

The Honourable Colonel Hutchinson, at five o'clock in the morning, moved an amendment—"That the House do adjourn till this afternoon."

The question being loudly called for, the House divided, when there appeared

For adjourning the debate	118
Against it	298
Majority against the adjournment	180

The House then divided on Mr. Grattan's original motion for referring the petition to a committee.

For going into a committee	128
Against it	281
Majority against the petition	153

AFFAIRS OF SPAIN.

JUNE 15th, 1808.

Mr. Sheridan, this day, in an animated and eloquent speech, brought the Affairs of Spain before the attention of Parliament. After having enforced the expediency of assisting Spain at this interesting and important crisis of her affairs, he proceeded:—

I am far from prompting His Majesty's Government to engage in any rash, romantic enterprise; but if, upon ascertaining the state of the popular mind in Spain, they find it is warmed by a patriotic and enthusiastic ardour, then, Sir, all I ask is, that that feeling should be met here with corresponding energy and enthusiasm. Buonaparte has hitherto run a most victorious race. Hitherto he has had to contend against princes without dignity, and Ministers without wisdom. He has fought against countries in which the people have been indifferent as to his success; he has yet to learn what it is to fight against a country in which the people are animated with one spirit to resist him. So far, Sir, from bringing forward a motion prematurely to embarrass His Majesty's Government, I solemnly declare, that if the opportunity to which I have alluded of a vigorous interference on the part of England should arise, the present administration shall have from me as cordial and as sincere a support as if the man whom I most loved

were restored to life and power. Sir, I think this a most important crisis. Never was any thing so brave, so generous, so noble, as the conduct of the Asturians. They have magnanimously avowed their hostility to France, they have declared war against Buonaparte; they have no retreat; they are resolved to conquer, or to perish in the grave of the honour and the independence of their country. It is that the British Government may advance to their assistance with a firmer step, and with a bolder mien, that I have been anxious to afford this opportunity to the British Parliament, of expressing the feelings which they entertain on the occasion. I move, Sir, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to direct that there be laid before this House copies of such Proclamations as have been received by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and which have been issued since the arrival of the French Army at Madrid; whether by the Spanish Government, the French Commander-in-chief, or by persons since claiming to act on behalf of the Spanish nation."

Mr. Secretary Canning replied nearly as follows:—Mr. Speaker, I am disposed to give every credit to my right honourable friend for his motives in agitating this subject, and I can assure him, that he is very much mistaken if he imagines that it was intended to check or rebuke him, by any thing that was said on a recent evening from this side of the House. At that time, al-

though I was in possession of my right honourable friend's communication, my right honourable friend near me was not so. Sir, I could very easily shew my right honourable friend that it is impossible to produce the papers for which he has moved; some, because they have not reached His Majesty's Government in an authenticated form; others, because they are not accurately described in the motion; and all, because if we were in possession of the information which they contain, it would be highly improvident in us at the present moment to communicate that information to the world. While I state this, however, Sir, I hope my right honourable friend will not misunderstand me so much as to suppose that I impute to him any blame for this proceeding, or that I undervalue the pledge which he has given us of his support in any plan of active operations which it may be deemed advisable to adopt with respect to Spain; the more especially when it is considered that in that pledge may be implied the support of those persons with whom my right honourable friend is accustomed to act in Parliament, and of whose body he is so eminent and distinguished a member. Sir, I should have been far from charging my right honourable friend with blame, even had he gone so far as to chalk out to His Majesty's Ministers the line of conduct that in his opinion it would be expedient for them to pursue. From this he has abstained. Indisposed

as I should have been to censure my right honourable friend, had he proceeded to that extent, I cannot but feel that his speech, moderate as it has been, calls for such a general disclosure of the sentiments of His Majesty's Ministers as may be made without hazard, without a dishonourable compromise, and without exciting expectations which may never be realised. It is therefore, Sir, I declare to the House and to the country, that His Majesty's Ministers see with as deep and lively an interest as my right honourable friend, the noble struggle which a part of the Spanish nation is now making to resist the unexampled atrocity of France, and to preserve the independence of their country; and that there exists the strongest disposition on the part of the British Government to afford every practicable aid in a contest so magnanimous. In endeavouring to afford this aid, Sir, it will never occur to us to consider that a state of war exists between Spain and Great Britain. We shall proceed upon the principle, that any nation of Europe that starts up with a determination to oppose a power which, whether professing insidious peace or declaring open war, is the common enemy of all nations, whatever may be the existing political relations of that nation with Great Britain, becomes instantly our essential ally. In that event His Majesty's Ministers will have three objects in view. The first, to direct the efforts of

the two countries against the common foe; the second, to direct those efforts in a way which shall be most beneficial to the new ally; the third, to direct them in a manner conducive to peculiarly British interests. But, Sir, of those objects, the last will be out of the question as compared with the other two. These are the sentiments with which His Majesty's Government are inspired. To the measures which these sentiments may dictate, they confidently look for the support of Parliament and of the country. It cannot, Sir, be expected that I should say whether we think the crisis arrived, or whether we anticipate its speedy approach, when the sentiments which I have described must be called into action. It is sufficient that I have stated what we feel, and what we intend. For the reasons, Sir, which I have before mentioned, I am compelled to dissent from my right honourable friend's motion.

Mr. Sheridan replied at the close of a very long discussion. He said that his object was to awaken the country to the opportunity which, if the information from Spain was true, might lead to the rescue of Europe, and to the release of oppressed countries from the grasp of a ruthless oppressor. He expressed his satisfaction with the disposition of Government, expressed through the right honourable Secretary (Mr. Canning).

The motion was then withdrawn.

STATE OF THE EMPIRE.

JUNE 24th, 1808.

Mr. Whitbread, on the motion for agreeing to the amendments of the Appropriation Bill, put some questions with respect to the various internal and external relations of the country. The questions of the honourable member, will be found repeated and replied to, in the following speech.

Mr. Secretary Canning.—Sir, the honourable gentleman needs no apology for making any observations, or proposing any questions to his Majesty's Ministers, which to him may seem advisable. I will endeavour, Sir, as far as I am able, and with the utmost disposition to frankness on my part, to give to the honourable gentleman the satisfaction which he requires. In doing this I will begin with the topics with which he concluded his speech. The honourable gentleman expresses great surprise that the armament sent to the assistance of the King of Sweden has not yet commenced active operations. The answer to this remark, Sir, is to be found in the proposition that this armament was sent to the assistance of the King of Sweden. It was sent to co-operate with the forces of an ally; to be

subject to the plans of warfare which that ally might direct. If in the interval that has elapsed from the fitting out of the expedition, considerable changes have taken place in the posture of affairs, and in the military councils of Sweden, that circumstance would sufficiently account for the inactivity of the British force. If any blame can be imputed to His Majesty's Government on this head, it must be for the decision which projected the expedition, and for the promptitude with which that decision was carried into execution, without waiting until all possible chance vanished of its remaining unemployed on its arrival. But the honourable gentleman expresses great surprise that the gallant commander of that expedition was found in England, to be placed at the head of it. Sir, I have in a great measure explained this circumstance on a former occasion. The force under the command of Sir John Moore, in Sicily, was removed from Sicily to Gibraltar at the eve of a considerable military operation in that quarter of the continent, and when it was highly important to afford the army engaged in that operation the double chance of receiving aid from home and from abroad. Sir John Moore arrived at Gibraltar in the latter end of November, two days after the emigration of the Royal Family of Portugal. Having waited for some time, of course in vain, for a communication with Sir Sidney Smith, he, in pursuance of his

orders, and not in consequence of an error, returned home. As to the impolicy of leaving Sicily with an inadequate garrison, I am ready to admit, that if it were possible it would be highly desirable to attend, at the same time, to every point of our military defence ; but, Sir, this is impossible: there are occasions on which a small risk must be run, for the hope of performing a great service. On this principle it was that His Majesty's Government thought it advisable to weaken for a time the garrison of Sicily. Whether in doing so they were or were not justifiable, it is for the country to decide.

I will next advert, Sir, to the questions of the honourable gentleman connected with our commerce. He asks whether His Majesty's Government have any security for the co-operation of Sweden in their commercial arrangements? Sir, I have no doubt that at this moment a treaty has been signed at Stockholm, not of indulgent, but of hearty co-operation in those arrangements. As soon as the Swedish Government were told what was expected from them by this country, without waiting for the formalities of a treaty, they entered cordially into our views ; but, Sir, it was thought advisable that a regular treaty should be concluded, and I repeat that I have no doubt that ere this it has been signed.

America, Sir, is the next subject of the honourable gentleman's speech which I shall notice. Of

nearly all that has passed between the two countries, the House and the public have been put in possession by the publications of the American Government. I presume that the honourable gentleman does not intend to blame His Majesty's Ministers for not having made similar communications to Parliament; for if he had thought such communications necessary, he would doubtless have moved for them. Without censuring their production by the American Government, His Majesty's Ministers have felt that the transaction being pending, any appeal from Government to Parliament would look as if it were concluded. I shall only state, that in the whole conduct of the British Government, with respect to the affair of the Chesapeak, we have endeavoured to keep in view the principle upon which we set out: namely, to make ample reparation for that which was a decidedly wrong act; but to make that reparation under a firm determination not to surrender a right which the great majority of the country has ever considered as essential to its dearest interests. Sir, I may boldly appeal to the country to determine whether, from the correspondence on the table of the house, any such disposition on the part of His Majesty's Ministers has appeared through the whole transaction. That the rupture of the negociation on this subject was not attended with any hostile feeling on either side is an incontrovertible truth. The reparation was not accepted by America, because

America would not fulfil the condition on which alone it was tendered; namely, the revocation of that proclamation by which British ships were not allowed to enter the harbours of America, while those of the enemy visited them at pleasure. But, Sir, the manner in which the British reparation was tendered to America by a special mission, was, to all the feelings of nice honour, an effective reparation; and so, in fact, we have every reason to believe that it was considered by the American Government. With respect, Sir, to the Embargo, and to the probable effects of the Orders in Council in producing its abandonment, the honourable gentleman has mis-stated my right honourable friend's propositions. The honourable gentleman declares my right honourable friend to have predicted that the Orders in Council would do away the Embargo; whereas my right honourable friend only argued, in opposition to the honourable gentlemen on the other side, that the Orders in Council did not produce the Embargo; that they were not substantively known in America when the Embargo took place; and that they were not included in the complaint made by the American Government to Congress, on which complaint the Embargo was founded. Nor, Sir, do I think that the Orders in Council themselves could have produced any irritation in America. If I were not disposed on this occasion to avoid making any observations that might be suspected of a party feeling, I

would say, that I do think the irritation in America may have been produced by the echo of the discussions in this House. Sir, since the return of Mr. Rose, no communication has been made by the American Government, in the form of complaint, or remonstrance, or irritation, or of any description whatever. I mention this particularly, because it is notorious that there have been several arrivals from America, supposed to be of great importance, and that several special messengers have reached this country from thence, after having touched at France. But, Sir, if the honourable gentleman, in the execution of his public duty, had thought fit to move for any communications that had been made by the American Government since the departure of Mr. Rose, my answer must have been, not that His Majesty's Government were disinclined to make them, but that absolutely there were none to make. If it be asked why? I am unable satisfactorily to reply. I can only conjecture that America has entered into negociations with France which are expected to lead to some result, and that the communications of America to this country are to be contingent on that result. This, Sir, is conjecture alone; but it is founded on the extraordinary circumstance of so many arrivals without any communication. It cannot be expected of me, that I should state prospectively what are the views of His Majesty's Government on this subject. The principle by which they have hitherto been

guided, they will continue invariably to pursue. They attach as much value to the restoration, and to the continuance of cordiality, and perfect good understanding with America, as any men can do; they are ready to purchase that advantage by every justifiable conciliation; they have proved that readiness by the act of the present session, in which the trade of America has been placed on the most favourable footing; but, Sir, they are not ready to purchase that advantage, great as they acknowledge it to be, at the price of the surrender of those rights, on which the naval power and preponderance of Great Britain is immutably fixed.

The honourable gentleman has alluded, with proper delicacy, to some unpleasant circumstances which the present stagnation of commerce has produced in a part of this country; but, Sir, in making this allusion, he has offered to the Executive Government a piece of advice, which, I trust, is unnecessary. He has recommended to us, Sir, in any measures which the excesses of the misguided may compel us to take, to discriminate between the objects of mercy and those of justice; and not to apply to innocence, goaded by want to imprudence, the punishment which belongs only to indefensible guilt. Sir, I trust it was perfectly unnecessary for the honourable gentleman to lay down this principle for the guidance of His Majesty's Government. And, Sir, if among those who, by the real pressure of the times, are incited to

tumult, men should be found who, without themselves experiencing any inconvenience, avail themselves of the irritation of others to forward views of a very different nature, then, Sir, I trust, that to such men the honourable gentleman would not wish his principle of lenity to apply. I state this, only because I think that the recommendation of the honourable gentleman is rather too much of a sweeping description, and that it implies a proposition which I do not choose at this moment, either to contradict or to adopt; namely, that one cause alone, the pressure of the times, is enough to produce the evils to which he has alluded, and that no other can exist in aid of it.—Sir, the honourable gentleman inquires whether the operation of the Orders in Council has produced the full effects expected from it? But he does not state fairly the extent of the expectation. It never was supposed by His Majesty's Government, that the Orders would throw no impediment in the way of the commerce of the country: we expected that they would impede the commerce of the country; but we imposed this restriction because restriction existed elsewhere, and because we thought that the restriction of the enemy would be more successfully combated by a defying restriction on our part than by helpless acquiescence and unresisting supplication—means unworthy of the British nation. I have now, Sir, gone through most of the honourable gentleman's

observations, except those which related to the different Committees of this House, to the general course of parliamentary business, and to the laborious attendance of members during the present session. Sir, I shall add but a very few minutes to that attendance, in expressing my cordial concurrence in the sentiments of the honourable gentleman; and I am persuaded, my right honourable friend near me (the Chancellor of the Exchequer,) is by no means disposed to dissent from the honourable gentleman's opinion, that this has been one of the most severe and laborious sessions that was ever known. If the honourable gentleman reflects with complacency on his share of the proceedings of the session, we have also the satisfaction to reflect that we have done our duty in it, and we certainly anticipate its close with a feeling of satisfaction. I will not extend it still further by wasting the time of the House in descanting on the desire which it is rational to suppose that Government must feel for the restoration of a peace, I will not say consistent with the honour of the country alone, but a peace by which her future safety and independence may be secured. The disposition which has ever existed in the minds of His Majesty's Ministers on this subject, and which was distinctly declared by us, on the motion made by the honourable gentleman at the commencement of the session, remains unchanged. But, Sir, I think, that under the present

circumstances of the Empire, the honourable gentleman will scarcely expect us to declare, whether or not we think there is any prospect of an opening for that event. The honourable gentleman may rest assured, that we feel as much as he, or any man, can feel, the difficulties in which the country is involved; but we also feel, that she has energy and resources enough to contend so long as it may be necessary to contend, for the maintenance of her power and independence; but to say any thing further on this subject, to attempt to predict whether peace is probable or hopeless, would, in my opinion, Sir, tend only, in the one case to relax exertion, in the other, to aggravate evil.

CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN.

FEBRUARY 24th, 1809.

Mr. Ponsonby, pursuant to notice, moved "That it is indispensably necessary that this House should inquire into the causes, conduct, and events of the late war in Spain."

Mr. Tierney supported the motion. Lord Castlereagh, General Stewart, and Mr. Colborne opposed it.

Mr. Secretary Canning* expressed his satisfaction that he had not spoken when he first offered himself to the attention of the House, but that he had given way to the three successive members who had favoured the House

with their sentiments, and to whom he felt himself under considerable obligation. To the gallant General near him, because he was now able to avail himself of that gallant officer's authority, in support of some very important facts—to his honourable friend (Mr. Colborne) who followed, for the ability with which he had refuted the arguments of the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Ponsonby)—an ability, the display of which had afforded him the highest pleasure, and from which the presence of his honourable friend alone prevented him from declaring how much he still expected. To the noble lord he was also under obligation; because, standing as the noble lord did, in so high a station in the country, and possessing, as he presumed he did, the hopes of the opposite side of the House, he was glad to find that the sum of what could be said on such an occasion, by such an individual, was so small. Amongst all the reasons which had been urged for inquiry, misrepresentation had held the foremost place in the speeches of the right honourable gentlemen opposite. They had endeavoured, by a series of the grossest misrepresentations that he had ever witnessed, to pervert fact, and to mislead the judgment of the House. The right honourable gentleman by whom the debate was commenced, had taken a general and comprehensive view of the subject, and his misrepresentations were as general as comprehensive. The right honourable gentleman who followed him, had contented himself with a more particular field, but that field he had filled in detail with misrepresentations, if possible, still more flagrant: the former had dealt in misrepresentation with a view to his

argument, but the latter had presented all his facts in a more discoloured and distorted shape, than in the course of his experience he had ever known; and this, too, whilst he gave to himself the character of a plain, blunt man, addressing to the House stout and stubborn facts in plain and simple language, and having truth alone in view. Certainly, the right honourable gentleman was a plain, blunt man, and he could have wished that he had completed the picture, and only spoken the truth. (A cry of order! order!) It was matter of surprise, he confessed, to him, that that right honourable gentleman had ventured to state as facts what he knew only from report, and to give to rumour the credit of undoubted authority; but in ten minutes he should shew that all his statements were unfounded.

The statement of the right honourable gentleman that night began with the army, when, after the campaign in Portugal, it became disposable, and proceeded to Spain. His first accusation against His Majesty's Ministers was for the manner in which they had assembled that army; and upon this point the right honourable gentleman had asserted that nothing could exceed the absurdity, as he termed it, of dividing the army into three separate columns, and of extending those columns over many miles of country, so as to make it impossible for the centre column to go to the left without abandoning the right column, or to go to the right without abandoning the left column. Now, with respect to that arrangement, whatever merit or demerit it might have, it was not the arrangement of Government. The right honourable gentleman had

said, that every twelve hours there had been a change of system and measure, in which case it would have been absurd to dictate any course of proceeding for the army in its progress in Spain; so that taking his own premises for granted, his conclusion would not follow, and his argument fell to the ground. His Majesty's Ministers had not been absurd enough to dictate from home the precise instructions, under which the British army was to act in all circumstances. They had sent out general instructions to the Commander-in-Chief, when the army was proceeding from Portugal to Spain, and at the same time informed him that they intended to dispatch a considerable force to Corunna, and that the transports which took that force out were to proceed to the Tagus to be placed at his disposal. The option was thus left to the General, whether he would proceed to Spain by sea or by land. The adoption of the latter course had been the choice of Sir John Moore, as would appear by one of the papers that would be laid on the table, which the right honourable gentlemen might have had produced, if they had thought proper to move for it, and had not preferred darkness to light. It was not because Sir John Moore could not proceed by sea that he had adopted that course, but because he thought it better to proceed by land. What, then, was to become of the fact of the right honourable gentleman that this arrangement was a military blunder of his noble friend? The division of Sir John Moore's army into two bodies was not the act of His Majesty's Ministers. The sending of the infantry by one route, and the cavalry and artillery by

another, was solely the adoption of Sir John Moore himself, and had not arisen from any want of communication or knowledge, but was resorted to in consequence of communications with a Spanish general officer, sent by the Central Junta, to arrange the line of march of the British army with Sir John Moore. This was a specimen of the facts of the right honourable gentleman:

"ab uno disce omnes."

But as the right honourable gentleman had already in one part of his speech, retracted a part of his accusation, he would, he was sure, upon finding that his charge was unfounded, retract the remainder. Could the right honourable gentleman believe it possible, that any administration, even the administration which preceded the present, would be so weak as to send orders to any General upon foreign service, to divide his army into two distinct parts, the one composed of infantry, the other of cavalry and artillery, and that each should advance by a different route against the enemy? He did not mean to find fault with this arrangement; but it was the arrangement not of Government, but of Sir J. Moore, and he had no doubt that the arrangement had been adopted on sufficient reasons. What those reasons were he did not know; but whatever they were, they were distinctly that gallant officer's own reasons; nor were the operations undertaken without any concert with the Spanish Government; on the contrary, the whole course had been arranged upon a distinct communication, and in concert with an officer from the Central Government of Spain. The right honourable

gentleman was not either more fortunate or more accurate in his account of the operations in Spain. For variety sake, he supposed, the right honourable gentleman had stated one fact correctly. He had stated that Sir John Moore, on hearing of the defeat of the three Spanish armies, had it in contemplation to fall back upon Portugal, and sent orders to Sir David Baird to retire also. But for fear that he should have one incontestable fact in his statement, the right honourable gentleman drew this false inference, that therefore Sir John Moore must afterwards have advanced against his will. Here again, the right honourable gentleman was totally mistaken. The fact was, that Sir John Moore had been informed of the determination of the inhabitants of Madrid to defend that city to the last extremity, and had suspended his retreat in consequence. This information he had received from those whose duty it was to direct the efforts of the people; a communication to the same effect had been made to him by Mr. Frere; and he was convinced that the inhabitants of Madrid had been at that time sincere in their determination of defending their city, or burying themselves under its ruins, if they had not been frustrated in their intentions by the weakness or the treason of some of those in whom they had confided, particularly of that once honest man, Don Thomas Morla, who had distinguished himself by his patriotism in the early period of the Spanish struggle. Sir John Moore might have questioned the courage of the inhabitants of a luxurious capital; but informed as he had been of their determined resolution, and by His Majesty's accredited Minister

to the Spanish Government, he might have expected Madrid to follow the example of Saragossa, and its inhabitants to emulate the intrepidity of the compatriots of the gallant Palafox. It was not his intention to blame Sir John Moore for the course he had pursued: on the contrary, he should have thought him blameable, if he had not adopted it; and he should not think well of the heart of any gallant soldier, who, upon such assurances of the determined resistance of Madrid, would have declined availing himself of the favourable opportunity it afforded for making a bold and enterprising effort against the common enemy. Here then the agency of Mr. Frere ended; and he must be allowed to add, that nothing had been done by that gentleman, but what was calculated to raise the character of this country in Spain, and to conciliate the attachment of that country to Great Britain. But the chief reason for Sir John Moore's advance was not founded on any external agency. It arose out of information received through an intercepted letter from Berthier to Soult, directing that General to be at a particular place on a particular day, and promising reinforcements; which letter led him to hope that by advancing he should be able to cut off that General's corps. At that time he had been joined by General Hope, and expected shortly to be joined by Sir David Baird, and in consequence Sir John Moore advanced to Sahagun. In this movement he acted as a statesman no less than as a soldier; because, even though he might fail, he must have gained an advantage for the south of Spain, whose exertions had never been relaxed, by drawing off the French army

from Madrid, and the prosecution of operations against the capital and the southern provinces. The right honourable gentleman had complained that no force had been sent to support the army at Corunna, and that troops, which had been on board transports, had been re-landed. The fact was true, but the right honourable gentleman's inference as to the re-landing these troops, was unfounded. They had been re-landed in consequence of a distinct requisition from Sir David Baird, that he wanted a certain number of transports, and the transports from which these troops had been disembarked, were sent out pursuant to that requisition. It was an afflicting circumstance that it should have been necessary to re-land these troops, and to send out empty, for the purpose of bringing off the British army, those transports which had been filled for the purpose of reinforcement and assault. Would the right honourable gentleman say that, at this distance from the scene, His Majesty's Ministers should have refused to send out these transports? He could assure that right honourable gentleman that the sending the transports empty from this country, had cost His Majesty's Ministers a severe pang. Amongst all the decisions to which he had been a party, in the course of his life, no one had ever occurred which gave him more pain than this: every dictate of the head was tortured, every feeling of the heart wrung by it; but His Majesty's Ministers had no choice: they were compelled to submit to the hard necessity. He felt that it would excite dissatisfaction in England, and excite dismay in Spain; yet painful as it was to re-land the

troops and send out the transports empty, His Majesty's Ministers had no alternative. He was not aware that there was any thing more in the right honourable gentleman's speech, to which it would be necessary for him to reply to particularly. He could not, however, pass from it without noticing the animation, rather more than usual with the right honourable gentleman, with which he began; no less than the indignation which pervaded the middle of his speech, and the reprehension of His Majesty's Ministers with which it ended. But there was one point more to which the right honourable gentleman had adverted, when he asked why Sir David Baird had been sent out without instructions? which it might be desirable for him to notice. Sir David Baird's force had been sent out as part of Sir John Moore's army; and consequently he was to take his instructions from that officer. As to the question why a force had not been sent out to meet the British army on its return to Corunna, it would be a sufficient reply to state that the despatches from Sir John Moore mentioned his intention to retreat upon Corunna or Vigo; the transports too, had been ordered from Corunna to Vigo, and the distance between these places was considerable, so that His Majesty's Ministers could not know whither to send a force to meet them. Without meaning the smallest disrespect to the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Tierney), he should here quit his rougher draft, and pass to the more comprehensive statement of the right honourable gentleman who preceded him, which, if it had only the quality of truth—he meant of foundation in fact—would have been a most dis-

tinguished specimen of eloquence. But that right honourable gentleman had employed the same guide as his right honourable friend—the misrepresentation of facts—to describe the conduct of the Government of this country to Spain. It would be recollected that the feeling of that House, and of the world, upon the first ebullition of the national spirit in Spain, was, that the Government of this country had but one course to pursue. It had been argued by the right honourable gentleman that before the assistance of this country had been given to Spain, it ought to have been ascertained whether or not the Spaniards were instigated by the monks; whether they were encouraged by the higher ranks, or animated by popery; whether they were wedded to their ancient institutions, or disposed to shake off the oppression of their former Government; to abjure the errors of a delusive religion, or prepared to forswear the Pope and the Grand Inquisitor. These were questions better suited for the employment of a period of learned leisure, than for the hours of action.

The right honourable gentleman, in tracing the limit which he pointed out, had drawn a line of insularity round us, which would separate us from the rest of Europe, even more than our insular situation, and leave us to defend ourselves. The policy of His Majesty's Government was different; they felt that the Spanish nation wanted other and more aids than lectures or municipal institutions; they were content that a British army should act in Spain, though the Grand Inquisitor might have been at the head of the Spanish armies; though the people might have been attached to their ancient monarchy, and with one hand

upheld Ferdinand VII., whilst with the other, they worshipped the Lady of the Pillar. To assist the patriotic efforts of the Spanish nation was the sole object, and they did not wish to inflict upon that country any change as the price of that assistance. God forbid! that we should ever be so intolerant, as to make a conformity to our own opinions the price of our assistance to others, in their efforts for national independence; or to carry the sword in one hand, and what we might choose to call the Rights of Man in the other! If the principle upon which Government had acted was not sound, if the measures resorted to had only paralized the efforts of the Spanish nation, for God's sake, let the administration of the Government be trusted to more enthusiastic and abler hands. But the enthusiasm of the Spaniards was not pretended; what they had in their mouths, they felt in their hearts; they were enthusiastically determined to defend their country to the last extremity, or to perish under its ruins. The language held by His Majesty's Government to Spain, was not that no assistance should be afforded till a Supreme Government should be established; but whilst the assistance was sent to every part of Spain, we called upon that country to collect its authority in one Supreme Government, not in order to obtain our assistance, but to induce other nations of Europe to join in aiding their exertions. Until this Supreme Government had been established, no accredited Minister could be sent to Spain; but at an early period of the national ebullition, agents had been sent by His Majesty's Ministers to all parts of Spain, and from the information

collected from these gentlemen, they were enabled to judge for themselves.

The right honourable gentleman had objected to the appointment of any other than a military man on a mission to Spain: but as the objects of the right honourable gentleman were of a philosophical nature, military men would not have been the most proper persons to be employed to accomplish them. But was there no other way of knowing the state of the country than by the barren reports of the agents, who might be sent thither? If one were desirous of knowing what was passing in England, would he not ask whether such or such a person, who might have been known in Europe to be connected with public affairs, had any share in the passing transactions? This source of information was open to us in Spain, and the men connected with the national struggle, afforded the best illustration of the principle, and the best comment upon the cause. In Catalonia, Espeleta, who had been Governor of South America, and President of the Council of Castile, took the lead. In Castile, Cuesta was at the head of the army. In Murcia, the venerable Florida Blanca, the ablest statesman in Europe. Besides these and others, there were Saavedra and Jovellanos, the former an able Minister for Foreign Affairs, the latter distinguished in the Home Department, whose connection with the popular ebullition was a fortunate omen of its success, and a distinct proof of its extent. Morla too was active in his country's cause; which, alas! he had since betrayed. But these were not all: amongst those who attended their Sovereign to Bayonne, and who took

the earliest opportunity to join their country, were Don Pedro Cevallos and the Duke d'Infantado. When the hoary wisdom of age, and the ardent enthusiasm of youth; when the whole mass of the population, and the distinguished individuals of every rank were associated for the common defence of their country, who could doubt of their cause? This was a state of things which His Majesty's Ministers could easily discern, without the aid of the spectacles presented by the right honourable gentleman. The military part of the transaction might have disappointed expectation, but the cause was not desperate. The soldiers who conquered at Baylen, and those who rallied after the defeat of Rio Seco, those who defended Madrid before they were soldiers, and drove the French out of Castile, were still staunch in the cause. The spirit of the people was unsubdued; the boundaries of French power were confined within the limits of their military posts; the throne of Joseph was erected on sand, and would totter with the first blast; and Buonaparte, even should he succeed, instead of a yielding and unreproaching ally, would have an impatient, revolting, and turbulent nation to keep down. In this state of things he could not admit that the cause of Spain was hopeless. Austria and Prussia had sunk under the fortune of Buonaparte; but though his career had not been stopped, it had been interrupted by the unarmed population of Spain. The cause of Spain and of Europe was not therefore desperate, because our army of thirty or forty thousand men had been obliged to withdraw from Spain; and it was not just to the country, or to the army,

which he hoped would again prove the stay and bulwark of Europe, to assert, that its honour was in consequence gone for ever. All the energy of liberty, and all the sacredness of loyalty, still survived, and the Spanish Revolution was, he trusted, destined by Providence to stand between posterity and French despotism; and to shew to the world, that amidst the paroxysms of freedom a monarch might still be loved. If they could shew that these were the feelings by which they were influenced, and that they had acted up to those feelings, their justification would be complete; and he was convinced that the liberal and disinterested measures of His Majesty's Government towards Spain were more congenial to British feeling, and more honourable to the national character, than if they had set out in their career of assistance by picking up golden apples for themselves. For himself, as an humble individual of His Majesty's Government, and having a share in these transactions, the recollection, whatever might be the vote of that night, would be a source of gratification which he should carry with him to the grave. Such had been the cause, in which His Majesty's Ministers had embarked; such the principles upon which they acted; and such the objects which they had in view. He could not admit, though the result of the campaign had not been such as they all would have wished, that therefore disgrace had been brought upon His Majesty's arms, when every operation of that campaign had proved so glorious for the character of the British army. If we had been obliged to quit Spain, we had left that country with fresh laurels blooming upon our brows: and

whatever failure there had been upon the whole, he trusted might still be repaired. If that was to be brought forward, as the ground for accusation, he stood there for judgment, and should submit with cheerfulness and patience to whatever sentence it might be the pleasure of the House to pass upon him. The object of the right honourable gentleman's motion was obviously calculated to take the reins of Government out of the hands of those who at present held them; and upon that ground he desired that the present Ministers might be judged by comparison. Was it the pleasure of the House that the cause of Spain should be abandoned? Was it a principle agreed upon that the direction of the affairs of Government should be committed to other hands? If a new course was to be pursued with respect to Spain, undoubtedly the direction of affairs must be put into new hands. Was it then a settled opinion, that there was something fatal in the will and irresistible in the power of Buonaparte; and was the world to submit to his tyrannous resolves as to a divine infliction? When he compared the present situation of Spain with what it was when the French were in the undisturbed possession of Castile, Catalonia, Biscay, and Portugal, he could not discover any grounds for despondency. The French had now Gallicia, but they had not Portugal: so that upon the whole the situation of Spain was not as unpromising as in June last. Why, then, should its cause be despaired of, unless gentlemen had their minds tuned to despair? Whatever might be the fruits of Buonaparte's victories, in other respects, the spirit of the Spanish nation was yet unsubdued. His fortune, no doubt, had been augmented; but still it

was fortune, not fate, and therefore not to be considered unchangeable and fixed. There was something unworthy in the sentiment that would defer to this fortune, as to the dispensations of Providence, looking upon it as immutable in its nature, and irresistible by human means.

"Te
"Nos facimus Fortuna Deam, cœloque locamus."

The right honourable gentleman concluded by stating his intention to give his negative to the motion. [A cry of Fire! fire! frequently interrupted the latter part of the right honourable Secretary's speech, and Mr. Sheridan, in a low tone, stated across the table that Drury-lane Theatre was on fire.]

Mr. Windham was about to reply, when Lord Temple suggested the propriety of adjourning the debate, in consequence of the extent of calamity, which the event just communicated to the House, would bring upon a respectable individual, a member of that House.

Mr. Sheridan observed that, whatever might be the extent of the individual calamity to himself, he did not consider it of a nature worthy to interrupt their proceedings on so great a national question.

General Mathew moved the adjournment of the question; the motion, however, with the concurrence of both sides of the House, was withdrawn.

The House divided, after a discussion prolonged until three o'clock in the morning:—

For Mr. Ponsonby's Motion	127
Against it	220
Majority against it	93

CONDUCT OF THE DUKE OF YORK.

MARCH 8th, 1809.

Mr. Wardle moved the order of the day for taking into consideration the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee who were appointed to investigate the Conduct of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, with regard to Promotions, Exchanges, and Appointments to Commissions in the Army and Staff of the Army. The honourable member proceeded to offer what he had to say upon the evidence, on the several prominent parts of which he commented at considerable length. He concluded by moving the following Address:—

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, humbly stating to His Majesty that information has been communicated to this House, and evidence produced to support it, of various corrupt practices and other abuses having prevailed for some years past, in the disposal of commissions and promotions in His Majesty's land forces; that His Majesty's faithful Commons, according to the duty by which they are bound to His Majesty and to their constituents, have carefully examined into the truth of sundry transactions which have been brought before them, in proof of such corrupt practices and abuses; and that it is with the utmost concern and astonishment His Majesty's faithful Commons find themselves obliged, most humbly, to inform His Majesty that the result of their diligent inquiries into the facts, by the examination of persons concerned, together

with other witnesses, and a variety of documents, has been such as to satisfy his faithful Commons that the existence of such corrupt practices and abuses is substantially true. That His Majesty's faithful Commons are restrained by motives of personal respect and attachment to His Majesty, from entering into a detail of these transactions, being convinced that they could not be stated without exciting the most painful sensations of grief and indignation in the breast of His Majesty. That the proceedings of His Majesty's faithful Commons upon this important subject have been public, and the evidence brought before them is recorded in the proceedings of Parliament; and that they trust His Majesty will give them credit when they assure His Majesty, that in the execution of this painful duty they have proceeded with all due deliberation. That without entering into any other of the many obvious consequences which may be expected to follow, from the belief once generally established, of the prevalence of such abuses in the military department, there is one great and essential consideration inseparable from the present subject, which they humbly beg leave, in a more particular manner, to submit to His Majesty's gracious consideration; namely, that if an opinion should prevail amongst His Majesty's land forces, that promotion may be obtained by other means than by merit and service—by means at once unjust to the army, and disgraceful to the authority placed over it—the effect of such an opinion must necessarily be, to wound the feelings and abate the zeal of all ranks and descriptions of His Majesty's army. That it is the

opinion of this House that the abuses which they have most humbly represented to His Majesty, could not have prevailed to the extent in which they had been proved to exist, without the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief; and that even if, upon any principle of reason or probability, it could be presumed that abuses so various and so long continued could, in fact, have prevailed without his knowledge, such a presumption in his favour would not warrant the conclusion that the command of the army could, with safety, or ought, in prudence, to be continued in his hands. That on these grounds and principles, His Majesty's faithful Commons most humbly submit their opinion to His Majesty's gracious consideration, that His Royal Highness the Duke of York ought to be deprived of the command of the army."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed, as an amendment to the honourable gentleman's Address, to leave out all of it but the word "that," for the purpose of converting his motion for an Address into a Resolution. He thought it absolutely and indispensably necessary that the House should decide the question of guilt or innocence, and therefore he should submit a question expressive of the sense of the House, that they should decide the question as follows.

The right honourable gentleman then read two resolutions, acquitting the Duke of York of any personal corruption or connivance at the infamous and corrupt practices disclosed in the evidence taken on the inquiry.

These Resolutions he proposed to introduce into an Address, the substance of which is contained in the following extract:—

"His Majesty's faithful Commons think it their duty to state to His Majesty, that whilst this House has seen with satisfaction, in the course of this inquiry, the exemplary regularity and method with which the business of the Commander-in-Chief has been conducted under the direction of His Royal Highness; and also the many salutary and efficient regulations which have been introduced into the army, during his command of it—some of which regulations have been specially directed to prevent those very abuses, which have in this inquiry been brought under the notice of the House of Commons—they could not but feel the most serious regret and concern, that a connection should ever have existed, under the cover of which, transactions of a highly criminal and disgraceful nature have been carried on, and that an opportunity has been afforded, of falsely and injuriously coupling with such transactions the name of His Royal Highness, whereby the integrity of his conduct in the discharge of the duties of his high office, has been brought into question; that it is, however, a great consolation to this House, to observe the deep regret and concern which His Royal Highness has himself expressed on the subject of that connection; as from the expression of that regret on the part of His Royal Highness, this House derives the confident assurance that His Royal Highness will henceforth invariably keep in view that bright example of virtuous conduct, which the uniform tenor of His Majesty's life, during the course of his whole reign, has afforded to all his subjects, and which has so much endeared His Majesty to the affections of every rank and description of his people."

Mr. Bankes moved another amendment, which varied slightly from the original one. It contained the additional expression, "That the abuses which had been disclosed during the progress of the examination, had unveiled a course of conduct of the worst example to public morals, and highly injurious to the cause of religion."

On the sixth night of the adjourned debate on the original Address, and the two amendments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Bankes,

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Mr. Secretary Canning, in a speech of great length and ability, commented on the evidence in all its details. A few extracts from the speech will suffice as a record of the part that Mr. Canning took in the discussions that arose on the inquiry into the Duke of York's conduct:—

Sir,—There are two Addresses before the House. For the Address of the honourable member who brought forward the question, I cannot vote, because I do not agree with the averments of it; but certainly I should have less difficulty in voting for that Address than for the Address supported by my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce, who supported the Address moved by Mr. Bankes).

Is it wise or fair when you have before you questions, all indeed of misconduct, but differing in their degrees: some calling for punishment, some for animadversion, and some more fitly perhaps the subject of silent regret, than either of punishment or of animadversion: is it wise or fair to take an indistinct view of all these questions at

once, and give, as it were, an average decision upon them? Is it just to the person who is the subject of this inquiry? Is it respectful, is it kind, is it humane to that other personage to whom those Addresses are to be carried, deeply interested as he must be in the result, both as a Sovereign and as a Father? Is a decision of such a nature consonant to the justice, or creditable to the character of Parliament?

First, as to what is due to the illustrious person whose conduct is the subject of this inquiry.

And here let me guard against an insinuation which is too often thrown out, as if there were intended to be some claim set up for particular forbearance towards this illustrious person, on account of his station; as if it were intended or attempted to prevent the House of Commons from inquiring into his conduct. I have seen no such thing attempted. I believe no such thing to have been intended in any quarter. And I trust, that whatever the decision of the House may be, there will not be fastened on the House itself, or on any member of it, a suspicion of having acted upon such views.

But when we are cautioned not to take into consideration the rank of the Commander-in-Chief in the course of the inquiry, or in mitigation of punishment, let us be sure that these considerations, so cautiously to be abstained from in favour of the Duke of York, be not suffered to operate the other way.

My honourable friend has spoken of the times

in which we live; my honourable friend is in the habit of viewing these times with a philosophical eye, of comparing the present with the past. Let him tell me whether upon comparison with any times of which he has ever read, he will say that the peculiar bent of the disposition of the present times is to exalt the high at the expense of the low? Will he tell me that the current of public prejudice does not run precisely the other way? I think my honourable friend will agree with me, that if there are any who allow weight to the consideration of the rank of his Royal Highness as exempting him from punishment, there are many, many more, whose feelings are the more acrimonious against him on that account, and who consider him as, on that account, the more desirable victim.

I must entreat the House therefore to look not to one side of this question only—that is all that I desire. All that it is right to ask on behalf of the Duke of York is, that he should have no favour, but no prejudice; that he shall be considered on a par with the meanest subject of his father; that he shall not be excluded by his rank from all those protecting presumptions which the ordinary course of law affords to every person under accusation.

What then is the situation of His Royal Highness? Charges have been preferred against him: —no, not *charges*, I am told, because not reduced into writing. To whom that is attributed, as a fault, if to any one, I do not know; charges, however, it

is said, there are none, they are only accusations.

These charges then, in the shape of accusations, not reduced to writing, but preferred in the manner in which they have been preferred, impute to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief the foul and degrading imputation of direct personal corruption, and of wilful and criminal connivance at the corrupt practices of others.

True it is, that in searching for evidence of these graver matters, you find evidence of matters of comparatively lighter moment; not free from blame, God knows, but blame of a very different description. You have developed scenes of misconduct, of the existence of which there can be no doubt, and which I neither can, nor would attempt to justify. But if in endeavouring to obtain the proof of the facts alleged against His Royal Highness, you have not been able to prove those facts, but have proved something different, something less, does it follow that if he is innocent of the great offence, the lesser ones are to preclude him from acquittal?

It is said, however, that there is no *record* of this inquiry; no specific entry on our journals which renders a specific sentence of acquittal or condemnation necessary. Posterity, it is said, will know nothing of our proceedings but from our journals; and there is, therefore, no injustice done to the Duke of York in leaving such a charge without an answer. Is it possible to urge this

argument seriously? If it might be true in former times that the formal acts, the recorded transactions of Parliament, and those alone, would go abroad to the world, or descend to posterity, blasting the name and character of a man accused, —are we therefore to be told that the case is the same now? That now, when by those modes of dissemination of which we are all aware, the knowledge of all that passes in this House is extended in a few hours to every corner of the kingdom, and by degrees to the remotest parts of the world; that there is now no unfairness, no cruelty, in leaving such charges unrefuted, because not formally entered upon *record?* Is there any man who can satisfy himself, in the present times, to set up this technical plea in defence of such substantial injustice?

So much for the *record*, even if the fact which is taken as the basis of the argument were true. But is there not, after all, a *record?*—is there not that *record* which, when in the most distant time or country our proceedings shall be read, will plainly indicate the nature of the charge, at the same time that there will be to becollected from our proceedings that condemnation, which, if we intend to pronounce it, surely we cannot intend to conceal?

What appears on the *record?* It appears that the House referred to a committee of the whole House, "to investigate the conduct of his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, with regard

to promotions, exchanges, and appointments to commissions in the army, and the staff of the army, and in raising levies for the army."

What further will appear, if this Address, if either of the two proposed Addresses shall be voted by the House? Why, that the House, after receiving the report of their committee, are of opinion that "corrupt practices *have* prevailed" in the disposal of promotions, exchanges, &c. &c. in the army.

With *whom* is that disposal? Why, with the Commander-in-Chief. *Whose* conduct were the committee to investigate in respect to this disposal? Why, the Commander-in-Chief's, the Duke of York's.

It is clear, therefore, that the Duke of York *will* appear, on the face of these proceedings, if we shall vote either of the Addresses proposed, to be found guilty of corruption; and yet, gentlemen who are prepared to vote for these Addresses, professed themselves at the same time ready to allow that there is nothing of corruption in His Royal Highness's conduct. Are they, or are they not ready to allow this? They must come to this averment or this denial. But to say that there can stand upon the journals of Parliament such a reference to a committee followed by such an averment of the existence of corrupt practices, and that, nevertheless, you have not framed any distinct charge, and therefore are not bound to give any distinct decision, is a course of proceeding as contrary to common sense as to common

justice. A vote founded on these pretences will produce all the effect, without plainly pronouncing the sentence of a condemnation. If you pass this Address, it is impossible that your country and posterity should consider his Royal Highness otherwise than as having been judged guilty of these charges, of charges the most criminal and degrading.

But it is admitted that these charges are false—(some member said *No!*)—I am glad to hear that it is not so admitted; I am glad to find that there is in some quarters at least an impatience of being supposed to admit what this Address is, by its supporters, pretended to imply; because I presume that those who feel that impatience will insist upon having their real meaning fairly and unequivocally explained by their vote. They will agree with me, not in their decision undoubtedly, but at least as to the manner in which alone their decision can be properly taken. They will call for a plain, intelligible question. They will not be contented with a speech of charge and a vote of compromise; a speech which insinuates guilt, and a vote which only avoids affirming innocence, and leaves the guilt to be collected and inferred. They will be for an "aye" or a "no" upon the questions of "corruption" or "connivance."

* * * * *

The Address of my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes) submits to His Majesty, "whether, even if it can be presumed that abuses so various and so long-continued, could have prevailed without the

knowledge of His Royal Highness, the command of the army can with propriety, or ought *in prudence*, to remain any longer in his hands." What should we say of a judge, who, in summing up the evidence on the trial of a culprit, should state to the jury this? "The evidence before you does not appear to prove the guilt alleged in the indictment; but it may not be *prudent* to say so. If, for other reasons not before you in evidence, you are of opinion that it is *expedient* the man should be hanged, you will take into accouut those *prudential* reasons for getting him out of the way, and frame your verdict accordingly." This is, in substance, the language of the Address: this is, almost without disguise, the language of those who support it. They have told us plainly that they do not think it *expedient* to come to a vote, a direct affirmative or negative vote, upon the plain question, "Guilty or not guilty of corruption?" Even my honourable friend who spoke last, in that part of his speech where he alluded to Parliamentary tricks, seemed to think that this call for a direct vote upon the principal charge was one of those tricks: a trick which he was determined to defeat. A trick, to call for decision upon a charge! A trick, to put an accused man on his trial! In what vocabulary shall we find words to describe the other functions of Parliament, if the performance of this, one of our highest duties, the ascertainment of guilt or innocence upon a grave criminal accusation—if the

endeavour to perform this duty strictly and conscientiously, is to be branded as a trick and a delusion?

The Duke of York has been accused of personal corruption, of wilful connivance. True it is, that he is assailed by minor charges; but will any one say, who loves justice, who thinks reverently of the laws of the land in which he lives, who remembers that in this land "no man is to be found guilty but by the judgment of his peers," and that even a person accused of the most heinous crimes has the right "to be presumed not to be guilty till he is proved and pronounced guilty"—will any man, who knows that he has these for his birthrights, and who prizes them as they deserve, will any such man be induced by any eloquence, by any ingenuity. or by the weight of any authority whatsoever, to consider a call for decision upon a charge, before punishment is inflicted, as nothing but a trick of Parliament, nothing but the tactics of a party?

It is on these principles that I do call upon you for a decision: principles, the fair operation of which were never denied to any man before. I ask for no partial favour for the Duke of York, beyond that which is due to any other subject in the kingdom: but let it not be said, that in the first case of the sort which the House of Commons has had to decide, it has made a precedent unfavourable to the party accused, for no better reason than because the party accused was of the

highest rank, and because justice done to him might therefore have been misrepresented as partiality! How any gentleman can have made up his mind to consent to a general *lumping* Address, condemning, by a comprehensive censure, without sentence, without reference to the proof of facts, to the gradations and degrees of blame, or to any just apportionment of punishment; and how, in agreeing to such an Address, any man can fancy that he is discharging conscientiously the duty imposed upon him on this occasion, does pass my understanding.

* * * * *

But in any case, in all cases, in any or in all modes of proceeding, this question of acquittal or condemnation upon the greater charges must take place, and must, in justice, precede even the examination of the less criminal matter of inquiry. To this justice, I say, the Duke of York, in common with every accused person, is entitled.

"Oh, (but it is said,) those only are entitled to this justice, who have not, by their own act, disinherited themselves of the rights and privileges of the British constitution." The Commander-in Chief, it seems, *has* done this: he has written a letter, Sir, through you, to this House, in which he has presumed to dictate to the House the mode of proceeding, and contumaciously to assert his innocence, and call for trial. True, Sir, he has written a letter: he has, in that letter, not

dictated but taken for granted, the same course of justice, in his own case, which is applicable, and is uniformly applied, to all his fellow-subjects. He has asserted his innocence. If that be denied, he has called for trial. What is there in all this to deprive him of the right of being tried, to justify the condemning him unheard? Look at the meanest prisoner at a bar, who waits the decision of his jury on an accusation of the foulest felonies; what is the course with respect to him? His crime is stated to him: he says he is "not guilty." If he omits this plea himself it is pleaded for him. In him this plea is not considered as contumacious; it is not considered as abdicating his right to a trial. On the contrary the felon is then asked how he will be tried? He replies, "by God and his country." In the felon, this is not considered as dictating to his judge. But, in the Prince, to call for a trial, is, it seems, a species of contempt of court, a rebellion against the supremacy of the tribunal before which he is arraigned, such as not only subjects him to punishment, but deprives him of the right of being tried. Is this equal justice? Will an honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread), who spoke the other day with great ability and great warmth on this very topic of the equality of the rights of princes with those of ordinary men, will he suffer patiently, will he consent to, and concur in effecting the gross *inequality* which this argument would establish, to the prejudice of the person now under consi-

deration, only *because* he is a prince? But the "honour of a prince," appeared to that honourable gentleman a most offensive expression. Why so? The "honour" of a *peer* is a regular and purely technical form of affirmation; why not the "honour" of a *prince?* But the honourable gentleman told us that the honour of a prince had been thus put in competition with the word of a prostitute, and that, being compelled to decide between them, he had felt himself obliged to believe the latter. "The Duke of York," said the honourable gentleman, "has aggravated his case, because I am thus put in a situation of the greatest difficulty and delicacy. I cannot condemn him of the crime with which he is charged, without condemning him at the same time, of falsehood, vouched upon his honour." This was the substance of the honourable gentleman's argument. Was the like ever heard? A man is accused of a crime; he protests his innocence; and his protestation is contended to be an aggravation of his offence, because you cannot afterwards affirm his guilt, without contradicting his plea of innocence! And this is a case of difficulty and delicacy, forsooth, to the honourable gentleman and his friends! O, this delicacy! it stands much in their way.

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Upon the view of the evidence suggested by the speech of my right honourable friend, what appears most incontrovertible and most important

is this — the only link that connects the foul transactions which have been developed to the House with His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, is the testimony of the offender herself. That this testimony has received partial confirmation from collateral and circumstantial evidence, that many statements which were at first sight thought incredible, have been confirmed, either by the testimony of others whose veracity is not questioned, or by letters produced by herself, or accidentally discovered, I readily allow; but nothing, independent of her own testimony, has proved the privity of the Duke of York.

My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) dwelt much on this part of the subject, and particularly on the almost providential detection (as he would have it to be) of the letters in possession of Capt. Sandon; which letters, he says (rather incorrectly), have been carefully evaded by all those who have spoken in defence of his Royal Highness. Does he know how many there were of those letters? Let him refer to the printed volume of evidence. There are forty-two. Does he know how many of these were commented upon yesterday, in great detail, with laborious particularity, and with convincing clearness, by my honourable friend (Mr. Croker), the effect of whose commentary was so completely satisfactory as to make it worse than useless to follow him? Why, exactly thirty-one. This is surely a com-

plete answer to the charge, that these letters have been studiously left unnoticed. But neither is it true that these letters, or any accidentally-discovered evidence, has gone to confirm the testimony of the principal witness and criminal, in respect to the privity of the Duke of York. It is incontrovertibly true that the charge of the Duke of York's privity to Mrs. Clarke's corrupt practices rests on the testimony of Mrs. Clarke alone. I say her "corrupt practices;" for with respect to her interference, without rebuke I cannot deny, and have no wish to excuse, the fact, that the letter respecting General Clavering, affords a decisive proof: but of corruption, or of the knowledge or suspicion of corruption, there is no proof at all; nor any thing that can, by the most uncharitable inference, be taken for proof.

The other piece of evidence which is thought to corroborate the testimony of the accusing witness, on this point, is the note respecting Tonyn; and this is the particular, with respect to which (as I have said) I entertain a different opinion from that declared by my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer). He thinks that note a forgery. I certainly believe that note to be genuine. After the most impartial consideration of what has been said for and against its authenticity, I am convinced (in my own judgment) that it is the Duke of York's note. But I think, at the same time, that a most exaggerated

importance has been given to this note. The doubts of its authenticity, and the attempts to disprove it, may, perhaps, have contributed to this exaggeration.

If I am asked, how I can explain this note innocently, I answer frankly, that I cannot explain it at all. I do not pretend to understand to what it refers. It is without date; it is an answer to a question, or a letter, which is not forthcoming; it contains three hurried lines: and in this total obscurity, and absence of any grounds of reasoning, or even of conjecture, I see nothing extraordinary in the not being able satisfactorily to explain it. The witness herself did not pretend to know any thing about it; nor, I dare say, would His Royal Highness.

But, Sir, I must protest on behalf of all who are, or may be, public men, against an inference of guilt from such want of explanation. Any man who knows what it is to be in a situation to receive twenty, and write perhaps a dozen letters in a day, many of them from and to persons of whom they have no personal knowledge, will feel with me, that if a note, of which they may have neglected to keep a copy, is to be produced against them, years after it was written, and they are to be called upon either to deny their hand-writing, or, acknowledging it, to account for the contents, they may any day in the year most innocently and inadvertently write their own condemnation.

Why, Sir, it happened to me to find among my papers, a very few days ago, the copy of a letter addressed by me to a lady in these words:—"Madam, I have received your valuable present, and have only to assure you, that you may depend on my discretion."—This letter was written not long ago—since this inquiry began; but at the moment of finding it, I was so utterly unconscious to what it related, and to whom, that I am very sure, if it had been to be used against me ten years hence, it might (if inability to explain it were a sufficient evidence of guilt) have been absolutely conclusive against my honour, or perhaps my life. I could not help fancying to myself the process by which I should thus have been proved guilty. My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) has told you that Buonaparte keeps ladies in his pay to corrupt the ministers of other courts. Well; here is a letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, written on such a day to a lady, acknowledging a "valuable present;" *i. e.* a bribe—a manifest bribe—and assuring her that she may "depend on his discretion." The very language of crime and confederacy! Now what could this be for? The treasonable intention is plain enough, but to what was it applied? Why, about that time peace was concluded with the Ottoman Porte, as much against the expectation as against the interests of Buonaparte. Buonaparte was naturally anxious to learn the

contents of the treaty; and, "see here," would my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce), or those who reason like him, exclaim, "See here, the letter to the Lord Mayor, announcing this Turkish peace, just two days before the date of this most providentially discovered letter." According to the reasoning applied to this note against Tonyn, here would be my condemnation complete. "A bribe was offered to the Secretary of State, of £10,000, to betray the articles of the Turkish treaty to Buonaparte. The lady avows she offered it; and here is the copy of a letter found in the Secretary of State's drawer, which proves his acceptance!" Here then would be conviction, and punishment of course would follow.

Now, Sir, what was the real history of this letter? and who was this lady? This lady, Sir, was a poetess, who did me the honour to send to me, but upon condition of my keeping her secret, her poem—"an ode to vaccination." This was the "present" which I acknowledged; and this was the "discretion" on which I assured her she might depend. But ten years hence I should not have recollected this. In ten, or five, or two years, in all probability, I should have forgotten both the ode and the lady: and if so, there would not have been wanting those who, according to this new mode of reasoning upon evidence, would have voted me guilty of high treason, and carried up an Address to the Throne for my removal.

Sir, I trust, if that note respecting Tonyn, because unexplained and unexplainable, is to operate the weight of a hair in judgment against the Duke of York, inferior courts of justice will not learn their rules and construction of evidence from us, the Commons of Great Britain.

Again then, I say, Sir, there is nothing in these hidden treasures, the letters discovered in Sandon's possession, which, like the talisman in the Arabian Nights, were supposed to shed light around them, and open to view the darkest recesses of iniquity; I say there is nothing that goes to supply the link which is wanting, in the whole concatenation of evidence, to fasten the knowledge of the corrupt practices of Mrs. Clarke upon the Duke of York. In many instances, as in the case of Spedding, these papers, so accidentally, so providentially brought to light, directly contradict and disprove her statement.

But then it is said, a witness who is incredible in some respects, is not so in all; therefore his testimony may still be believed, where it is corroborated by others. It will not be contended, however, that an incredible witness, such as Mrs. Clarke is allowed to be, is to have the whole of her evidence believed, because her testimony is accidentally strengthened in some parts: she is credible only where her evidence is confirmed. One gentleman, indeed, of great talents and eminence the former Solicitor-General (Sir S. Romilly),

expressed an opinion, which, if he does entertain, I hope he will be found to be the only man who entertains it, "that a witness who is detected in giving false testimony, in one particular, *at the bar of the House of Commons*, is not so much to be distrusted, as to the remaining part of his testimony, as a witness who trips when *upon oath;* that *perjury*, indeed, affects not only *that part* of a witness's testimony which is proved to be false, but the *whole;* but that an *unsworn* falsehood vitiates only *the part so* falsified, and leaves the *remainder* as worthy of credit as before." Such I collected to be the honourable and learned gentleman's doctrine; and a doctrine more monstrous in morals, or more destructive of the jurisdiction of the House of Commons, it would not be easy to devise. That a witness who speaks falsely when *not on oath*, is not thereby rendered wholly unworthy of belief, when the sanction of *an oath* is applied to him, is an intelligible proposition: a man *might* be ready to *say* what he would not *swear:* but to maintain that he who is proved to have *said* one thing falsely, is not therefore liable to be suspected of *saying* another thing falsely; that he is to be believed in the *remainder* of his testimony, as if he had not been detected in falsehood in a *part*, is a proposition which it will require something more than the single authority of that honourable and learned gentleman, (however he may pride himself on that singularity), to maintain.

The main questions, therefore, to which you must come, are these: do you believe Mrs. Clarke's evidence, or do you not? Or do you see reason to think that there is a mixture of truth and falsehood in it? There are but these three possible degrees of credit. Do you believe this woman altogether? She affirms corrupt knowledge and participation to the fullest extent. Believing this, you cannot refuse to bring the Duke of York to trial. Do you *not* believe her? Say so; say so by your vote, by a recorded sentence. Are you in doubt? Do you find it difficult to determine how much to believe? how much to reject? *That* is precisely the case for further inquiry. "To be once in doubt is to be once resolved." Institute such inquiry as shall convert your doubts into certainties; and probe the matter to the bottom.

The evidence of Mrs. Clarke is true, or it is false, or it is partly false and partly true. Are there no means of sifting such evidence? Are there no sanctions, sacred in the eyes of God and man, by which truth and falsehood can be discriminated? Have those sanctions been applied to this testimony? They have not. Have you the power of applying them? Not of yourselves, but by reference to another tribunal. Can any honest man doubt, then, that such ought to be our course, rather than to confound the false and the true in a compromise of injustice, and to come

to a conclusion which *may* be wrong *either* way, but can by no possibility be right?

But if the proof is deficient, what is the presumption of guilt in His Royal Highness the Duke of York? Your address affirms "that there were corrupt practices with respect to promotions, &c. in the army." It does not affirm that the Duke of York was cognizant of them: but it more than insinuates that he was, that he must have been so. What is the ground of this insinuation? These corrupt practices were carried on by a firm consisting of the Duke of York, Mrs. Clarke, Colonel Sandon, Mr. Donovan, &c. In 1806 this partnership is dissolved. The Duke of York goes one way; Mrs. Clarke and her associates the other. Are the practices continued after this separation? Yes. By whom? By Mrs. Clarke and Captain Sandon. And yet you prosecute—whom? The Duke of York. You never hear of the Duke of York's malpractices, except in connection with Mrs. Clarke's name; of Mrs. Clarke there are abundant malpractices, wholly unconnected with the name of his Royal Highness; and yet you think it just to punish in him, not in her, the guilt of that which you do not even show him to have known.

* * * * *

But my honourable friend tells us that all the world knew of this connection; that it was matter of notoriety that the Duke of York was living

in this state of disgraceful concubinage with Mrs. Clarke. I do assure the House, in the most solemn manner, that I did not know it; and that the first time that, to my recollection, I ever heard the name of Mrs. Clarke, was in this House, from the lips of the honourable gentleman, who is the accuser upon this occasion. I may be giving a great proof of my ignorance of what is going on in the world by this declaration, but upon my honour it is true; and that of which I was ignorant may have been equally unknown to others.

This utter ignorance it was, coupled with the utter disbelief which I felt, of the Duke of York's submitting to the sort of traffic imputed to him (a feeling which I should entertain in its full force, if I were to hear the same charges to-morrow brought against any honourable gentleman on the opposite benches), that extorted from me, on the night when the honourable gentleman opened his charges, those expressions of indignation which I have so often, in the course of this debate, been called upon to retract or to explain. Sir, I have nothing to retract on that score; nothing to explain: but I have something to deny.

I *did* say that "infamy must rest somewhere," but I did not say that it must rest "either on the accuser or on the accused." I affirm this with confidence; not only from my recollection of the words, but from my recollection of what

was the state of mind in which I spoke, and what the scope and purview of my statement on that occasion. I have, besides, endeavoured to correct and confirm my own recollection, by reference to others, by reference to certain records which it would not be regular directly to name, but which I must describe as well as I can, without naming. Suppose, Sir, there were daily to be published accounts of what passes in this House, multiplied perhaps to the number of ten or a dozen, and suppose I were to find my words stated, according to my own recollection of them, in ten or eleven of those accounts, and stated, as the noble lord and those opposite recollect them, by only one of those reporters, and that one notoriously a decided enemy to me and to those with whom I act; should I not be warranted in considering the many which agreed in confirming my own recollection, as better authority than the one which contradicted it? Should I not be warranted in doing so, more especially if I should find, at the same time, another part of the same speech cautiously omitted in that one, and accurately detailed in almost all the others? I refer, Sir, to what I said, in the same speech, about the liberty of the press. I said that the libels on the Duke of York had been so frequent and so flagrant, "as almost to make good men hesitate whether the licentiousness of the press was not more mischievous than its liberty was beneficial." I

said this, it is true; but in the same breath I added, "The hesitation, however, can be but for a moment: the blessings of the liberty of the press are so clear and so acknowledged, as far to outweigh the mischiefs of its abuse. The evil is transitory, but the good is immortal."

* * * * *

I know, Sir, that in the language of Parliament, I must not advert to considerations which, in every other case, and before every other tribunal, would be thought worthy of some attention. The venerable age, the infirmities, and the virtues of the royal person, whose heart is to be torn by this Address, are surely not to be overlooked in the question of the mere form of your proceeding. I do not say, God forbid! that these considerations should warp the decision; but surely they may be allowed, blamelessly allowed, to operate upon the manner of pronouncing it.

It was stated some nights ago, with as much truth as eloquence, that we owe to the Sovereign now upon the throne, not only that allegiance and duty to which his high functions entitle him, and which the institutions of the country prescribe and consecrate, but we owe to him, eminently and individually, gratitude for the preservation of those institutions themselves. Who but must recollect the time when the minds of men in this country were unsettled by the first shock of the French Revolution, and when the wildness of

theory and speculation put to hazard all the establishments of the state? Who but must recollect that, at that most agitated and alarming period, when the frame of our constitution, the whole fabric of our laws, and the authority of Parliament itself, were threatened to be jostled out of their order, and laid in ruins, that even then, amidst the conflicts of passion and the schemes of change, the throne was kept steady by the virtues of him who filled it? and that while every thing else, however venerable, was endangered, the monarchy was worshipped in the person of the King!

Of such an individual would you not wish to spare the feelings? This Address itself professes to intend to do so. With what delicacy—

Mr. Tierney said, he rose to call the Right Honourable Gentleman to order, conceiving he was using the King's name to influence the House.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, the honourable gentleman has interrupted me, perhaps not improperly. I feel no resentment for the interruption. Unquestionably the argument is one not easy to manage in perfectly strict conformity to the rules and orders of the House The right honourable gentleman has a right to enforce those orders, but then I entreat the House to observe in what a situation he places me. This Address, indeed both Addresses, and the mode of proceeding by Address, have been defended on the ground that

it was proper to proceed in the manner least injurious to the feelings of the King. The Addresses themselves contain this sentiment. The supporters of the Addresses have recommended the adoption of them on this ground. But when I proceed to examine the truth of the statement on the faith of which we are called upon to vote; when I presume to inquire how far the Address is consistent with the professed purpose of those who framed it; how far they have executed their own intention, and secured their own object; I am stopped by the right honourable gentleman, who tells me that I am out of order. The Addresses are praised because they are so tender of the King's feelings; but when I venture to describe those feelings, and to probe this professed tenderness, I am told that I travel on forbidden ground, and that you, Sir, and the House must not hear me! Is this just? With this topic, however, I have done.

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The proceeding by Resolution is that which has been adopted in almost all instances, in good times, from that of the Duke of Marlborough, down to the last instance, in the case of Lord Melville. Of Addresses, not either preceded by some examination where the evidence was taken on oath, or not founded on previous Resolution, I have not found approved instances. I have found instances enough to show that the other is the

approved Parliamentary practice. Why, then, should we depart from it on the present occasion? Why are we to do this? Because, forsooth, there is a public expectation awakened of some immediate and sweeping act of wrath and vengeance on the part of the House of Commons; and in your eagerness to gratify that expectation, you must refuse to listen to the voice of justice and reason, and to follow the recorded practice of good times!

I would fain persuade you to adhere to sound precedent. But according to some doctrines of this day, you must shut your ears to every thing that I, or any one in my situation, can say to you. For we have heard from an honourable baronet, (Sir Francis Burdett) whose usual practice it is to impute to persons in office all sorts of corruption and incapacity; but we have heard it not from him only; he has been followed by one of the greatest landed proprietors among us (Mr. Coke) —a gentleman who seems to think that he derives from his landed property a degree of authority which property alone, however great, cannot confer—that what comes from any man in office, on this or any other subject, is not to be attended to; that it is worth nothing. Sir, from whatever quarter such sentiments proceed, I hear them with scorn. They disgrace only those who utter them; and show only what it is that they who are capable of imputing base motives to others would themselves be, if they were in official situations.

But, however I may despise such sentiments, I cannot hear them without regret; because I know that property, in times like those in which we live, has need of all the protection which good order and good government can give it; and I think it but ill pleads its own cause, and but ill provides for its own security, when its possessors endeavour to instil into the minds of the people a distrust, not of this or that individual, but of the whole class and description of public men. The honourable gentleman who uttered this sentiment may fancy himself safe, in the extent of his possessions, from all the inconveniences attending popular commotion; but let him not think that the destruction of the authority of Government, and the degradation (if his opinion or his exertions could effect that degradation) of all those who, by their habits and their education, are qualified for public life, or by an honourable ambition are led to engage in it, however it might conduce to the aggrandisement of his individual importance for a time, would in the end secure the stability of that property on which he founds his pretensions to pre-eminence.

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Whatever our decision shall be, I fear not for the character of the House of Commons. The confidence which I feel in this respect does not proceed from indifference. I deem as highly of this branch of the constitution as any man. I

think it would be difficult to point out the individual who must, from every motive of education, of personal feeling, and, I hope, not dishonest ambition, be more sincerely interested in the honour of the House of Commons; in the maintenance of its honour in the eyes of the country; and of its power, its preponderance in the balance of the state. But I would not flatter the House of Commons any more than I would offer adulation to my Sovereign. I would not betray either into an abuse of power, by encouraging either to mistake power for right. The House of Commons, acting upon this principle, would be a despot: and a despot whose tyranny would not be less intolerable than that of a single tyrant. It is not every thing which the House of Commons can do, that it therefore ought to do. It is not because it has the power to sweep from his station whomever it may choose to sacrifice to its displeasure, that it would be justified in condemning the Duke of York either against evidence or without trial—in condemning him upon any other principle than that which would apply equally to the meanest individual, or by any other process than that of impartial and dispassionate justice.

On a division the numbers were

For Mr. Bankes's Amendment	199
Against it	294
Majority against the Amendment	95

A second division afterwards took place on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Amendment on Mr. Wardle's Address.

For the Amendment	364
For the original motion	123
Majority in favour of the Duke of York	241

Adjourned at half past six o'clock on Thursday morning.

CONDUCT OF LORD CASTLEREAGH.

APRIL 25th, 1809.

Lord A. Hamilton moved the following Resolutions:—

"First.—That it appears to this House, from the evidence on the table, that Lord Viscount Castlereagh, in the year 1805, having just quitted the office of President of the Board of Control, and being then a Privy Counsellor and Secretary of State, did place at the disposal of Lord Clancarty—a member of the said Board—the disposal of a Writership to India, for the purpose of thereby procuring the said Lord Clancarty a seat in this honourable House.

"Secondly.—That it was owing to a disagreement among other subordinate parties to the transaction, that this corrupt negociation did not take effect.

"Thirdly.—That the said Viscount Castlereagh has been

by the said conduct guilty of a violation of his duty, and of an abuse of his influence and authority as President of the Board of Control, and also of an attack upon the purity and constitution of this House."

Mr. Secretary Canning* agreed with what had fallen from honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House, that the character of the House was more to be attended to, than the character of any individual whatsoever. He perceived, however, that every gentleman who had spoken, entertained a due sense of the manner in which his noble friend had conducted his defence, and did not wish to press any severe sentence upon him. They might then take into their consideration, that the intention of the noble lord was never carried into execution, and that it certainly would have been retracted, if the noble lord had afterwards come to learn the character of the person, and the circumstances of the offer. No man could say the noble lord had conducted himself with contumacious contempt. He had expressed as much humility as he could, consistently with his own honour and the dignity of the House. Every liberal person would acknowledge, that there was a manner of recanting an error which became a man, and the noble lord had a claim on that ground to the good opinion of the House. He, therefore, in voting for the orders of the day, by no means thought the House thereby would pronounce that the case submitted to them was not of very serious importance, but that the voting for the other orders of the day was, according to Parliamentary usage, a way of shewing that the House had taken the case

into its consideration, and that having weighed all the circumstances, they did not think it necessary to come to any criminating resolutions. In order, however, to express this opinion more clearly and unmistakeably, he would rather wish that instead of the orders of the day, a resolution should be substituted, declaring that the House saw no reason for a crimininating resolution. Mr. Secretary Canning concluded by stating, that when the present question was disposed of, he should submit to the House the following Resolution :—"That it is the duty of this House to maintain a jealous guard over the purity and independence of Parliament; but that this House, duly weighing the evidence before it, and all the circumstances of the case, and considering that the intention referred to in that evidence was not carried into effect, this House does not think it necessary to come to a criminatory resolution upon the same."

At half-past two o'clock the House divided on the original Motion.

Ayes	167
Noes	216
Majority against it . . .	49

The House shortly afterwards divided on Mr. Canning's Amendment.

Ayes	214
Noes	167
Majority for it	47

VOTE OF CREDIT—ADDRESS RESPECTING AUSTRIA.

MAY 31st 1809.

On the bringing up of the report of the Committee of Supply, and the resolution being read of a vote of credit of three millions, to be placed at the disposal of Government, to be used by them as circumstances might render it advisable to dispose of it;

Mr. Whitbread proposed, instead of the Resolution, the following Address to His Majesty:

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return to His Majesty the thanks of this House, for His Majesty's most gracious message, wherein His Majesty has been pleased to inform his faithful Commons, that the ancient relations between His Majesty and the Emperor of Austria have been happily restored, and that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct the treaty, whereby such relations have been confirmed, to be laid before the House, when the ratifications should have been exchanged. To assure His Majesty that this House will lose no time in taking such treaty into its most serious consideration, in the earnest hope that it may be found, that the stipulations of such treaty have been concerted with wisdom, and that the interests and existence of the Austrian Empire may not have been put to increased hazard, by the adoption of rash and precipitate counsels. To acquaint His Majesty that this

House sees with satisfaction that the provisions of the treaty with the Emperor of Austria, do not include any stipulation for pecuniary assistance from this country. That his faithful Commons have learnt with surprise, that without any authority given on the part of His Majesty, the Austrian Government has thought proper to draw upon His Majesty's Treasury, for certain sums of money, in aid of her warlike operations: that with whatever regret such refusal may be accompanied, His Majesty's faithful Commons do nevertheless feel themselves bound to refuse the payment of such bills, or to give countenance to such an unauthorised act on the part of a foreign power, which, being totally without precedent, might itself go to the establishment of a precedent of a most dangerous nature, and such as the House of Commons, as guardians of the public purse, can in no way consent to sanction. And further to acquaint His Majesty, that upon a review of the enormous sums of money, which, under the direct title of subsidies, and under the more specious denomination of loans, have been advanced by this country to foreign powers, by far the largest part of which has been given to the house of Austria; and upon a review of the result of such exertions, as manifested in the present state of Europe, His Majesty's faithful Commons do not feel themselves justified in consenting to the advance of any further sums of money for the Emperor of Austria. The view taken by His Majesty of other intended demands likely to be made upon the resources of the country, plainly shew that His Majesty does not contemplate the propriety or possibility of making any such large advance as could be

likely to give any great additional support to the internal resources of the Austrian empire; whilst at the same time every additional burden upon the subjects of these kingdoms must be severely felt, and ought not to be imposed, except where the national faith is pledged, the advantage to be derived probable, and the expectation of such advantage grounded upon wise and well matured calculation.—To assure His Majesty, that so long as a hope can be entertained of a successful issue to the Spanish cause, and consistency and effect can be given to the exertions of the people of Portugal by pecuniary assistance from this country, His Majesty's faithful Commons will cheerfully grant to His Majesty the means of furthering so great and glorious an object; but in making such sacrifice, on the part of the people, His Majesty's faithful Commons earnestly recommend it to His Majesty, that the application of the money entrusted to His Majesty's disposal, should be made with the greatest care and the most attentive discrimination; always recollecting, that the events of each succeeding day shew the neeessity of strict economy in the management of the resources of the state, in order to be prepared for that last and most arduous struggle, to which, as it appears to this House, these events are but too likely to lead."

Mr. W. Smith and Mr. Hutchinson opposed the Address, and supported the Vote of Credit.

Mr. Ponsonby said, that in his opinion, any assistance we could afford to give Austria in the way of money, would not be of any real utility to her. If, however, Ministers did advance any of that money to Austria, and could shew,

upon another and a future occasion, that there was good reason to imagine advantage was likely to arise from it, even although Austria should ultimately be unsuccessful, he should not be then disposed to blame them.

Mr. Secretary Canning* said, that whatever shades of difference there might have been in the speeches of the honourable gentlemen, yet the general result of them all was so much in favour of the proposed resolution, that he might agree with their general matter, and be dispensed from making any further observations. He should incline to act thus, were it not that he stood liable to be challenged by the right honourable gentleman who last spoke, as not having attended to his call, though on many other occasions it might be said he had attended to calls of a more irregular tendency. There was but one part of the right honourable gentleman's speech which in detail he should consider it necessary to oppose, for, in fact, an honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. W. Smith) had, in what he said, dismissed the other points which the right honourable gentleman had stated. The sum which on this occasion was voted was the same which was usual in war time, and upon the like occasions to grant. There could be no great jealousy in the House with respect to the sum or the method of its application. The specific mention of Austria in His Majesty's Message had not been, in fact, considered as by any means necessary. If it had not been for the peculiar exigencies of that country, she would not have proceeded to draw for

pecuniary advances in the manner she had done. There were three grounds stated for this Vote of Credit, any one even of which he should have thought sufficient to induce the acquiescence of the House, and to insure the accustomed confidence in the discretion of His Majesty's Government, that the sum would be properly applied to any exigency that might arise. With regard to the sums for which the Austrian Government had thought proper, without any authority, to draw upon this country, he could assure the House, although it was determined to pay them, that such measures had been taken by remonstrance and other means, as were calculated to guard against such a case being drawn into precedent. In the remonstrance, however, which had been made to Austria upon this occasion, care was taken that nothing should occur, which could have the complexion of harshness: for the nature of the exigency, and the difficult circumstances of the communication with this country, independently of other considerations, forbad the slightest resort to any thing of that description. From the manner in which something that escaped from him on a former occasion, had been interpreted by the gentlemen on the other side, he thought it necessary to repeat, that Ministers left it entirely to Austria herself to consider the capacity of her own resources to engage in the present contest, and to determine the question whether the situation in which she was placed with relation to the enemy, was tolerable, or whether it was preferable to make a struggle for her liberation. Such, indeed, was the conduct of this country with every other state. Austria was advised to

examine her own internal strength, to compare it with the resources of the enemy with which she had to contend, and not to look to any auxiliary support this country was capable of affording, to enable her to rise out of such a war with safety. His Majesty's Government, therefore, although it did not discourage Austria from making an effort which she deemed necessary to her own honour and safety, could not be said to offer any counsels that could commit itself in the undertaking. But when Austria had embarked in the contest, it was thought wise by our Government to furnish every assistance in its power. It was not that Austria engaged in the war exclusively to the aid of England, acting as a conductor to withdraw from its shores the influence of the dreaded lightning, but it was under the impression, that as she had entered into the contest, so she should either come whole out of it, or expect that her ruin would be the consequence. Austria sought self-preservation. She determined rather to attack the enemy beyond her frontiers, than by waiting his approach, to afford facilities for her destruction. Under the impression made by this situation of Austria it was, that every honourable gentleman, save one, had made an allowance for the manner in which she acted, respecting the advances demanded from this country.

The honourable gentleman had not perhaps, in so decided a manner as on a former occasion, expressed his opinions on the question of justice on the side of Austria; though not content with other presumptions in favour of France, he had collected from the early periods of the revo-

lutionary war, materials to show that all Europe had not acted with any other view than the partition of unoffending France. The honourable gentleman here rested only on exploded documents, which were known to be forgeries, representing the princes of Europe in the light of partitioners, and which documents were current at that period when all Europe was inundated by representations against the crowned heads and old establishments of the continent.

The honourable gentleman had said much of Austria not turning round till she saw France engaged in another quarter. Was it to be expected that Austria should patiently and unresistingly wait till France had thought proper to swallow her up? He could not persuade himself to acquiesce in the gloomy forebodings of the honourable gentleman; because though Austria might ultimately fall, it would be setting an example of hopelessness and submission even then to despair. He would say, that the powers which now assisted the enemy in his exertions would perhaps, ere the last act was accomplished, regret that they had ever united their means with his. If it should prove, that even after the capture of its capital, the heart of Austria had yet remained entire, then was her situation much superior to what it was at any former period. If the example of the contest in Spain, in which alone the arms of France had been as yet opposed with effect, should be imitated in Austria, he saw no reason to justify despondency as to the Austrian cause.

With respect to Spain and Portugal, all were of one opinion as to the propriety and policy of the assistance to be

rendered to them. He could not, however, but observe, that the speech of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Ponsonby) would place Ministers in a situation of considerable difficulty. The last session a warning came from the other side of the House on this subject, to the effect that Ministers should abstain from any thing which would look like the exclusive consideration of British interests. They now were bequeathing a legacy of caution rather to provide for a reverse than for success, and thus encouraged in this instance what they on a former occasion disavowed. The advice of the right honourable gentleman might, in fact, if followed, furnish him with a certain ground of attack against Ministers. Between these two contradictory courses, Ministers were placed in such a situation, that he had no doubt that whichever should be pursued, the party to which the right honourable gentleman belonged, would contrive to find materials for censure. Thus the right honourable gentleman would in either point of the dilemma have the best of the argument over Ministers. With respect to the observations that had fallen from an honourable gentleman, in relation to the maritime rights exercised by Great Britain in the detention of neutral vessels, he besought those philosophers and theorists, who were so fond of recommending their abstract notions of justice to the adoption of Ministers, particularly respecting our maritime ascendancy, which might, and no doubt was sometimes abused, to consider the character of the enemy whom we had to encounter, and to reflect whether we ought to disarm ourselves of any retaliation upon him, by whom no principle

of justice whatever was held sacred. When it was considered that in all the countries of Europe British property had been confiscated; when it was considered that contrary to the mitigated practice of the law of nations in modern times, if not contrary to the recorded law, the persons of unoffending travellers had been seized, not only in France, but in every country under the influence of France, it must be manifest that if there was any thing in the maritime practice of this country which ought to be modified, it should be so modified, not by an act of the Parliament, but by a mutual arrangement with the other powers of Europe. It would be most unwise to seize a moment of unexampled violence as the fittest for disarming ourselves of a practice so long adhered to, and which had woven itself into the principles of our maritime warfare.

As to the connections between this country and the island of Sicily, he had formerly made some observations to the House relative to the right which it was asserted Great Britain had acquired by defending Sicily to interfere in the melioration of her internal affairs. He differed widely from the honourable gentleman opposite, in thinking that that period when a British garrison was in a country was the period when recommendations of the nature alluded to ought to be made. The blessings enjoyed under the British Constitution were the effect of gradual, not of sudden improvement. It was not because we carried in our bosoms the image of that constitution, that we should expect to see it reflected in every other country. It was to be hoped that any nation whose intercourse and union with Great Britain were intimate,

would gradually imbibe the feelings of Great Britain; but it could not be expected that sixteen thousand bayonetted philosophers would suddenly produce the effect which in Great Britain had been the result of the Revolutions, and the accumulated wisdom of ages.

After adverting to the allusions made to the speech imputed to him at a late meeting at the London Tavern, to the formation of which he declared he gave no assistance whatever, the right honourable gentleman begged it to be understood, that he never expressed any disapprobation of the discussion of politics at such meetings, his observations always applying to the nature and character of such discussions. He did not object to the practice but to the matter. Before he sat down, he could not avoid saying a few words on what had fallen from the honourable gentleman respecting the appointment of a British Minister* to Spain. The honourable gentleman had said, that this country had given the worst proof of its intentions towards Spain by the choice that had been made: and he had grounded this assertion on the presumption that the charges which had been made against that noble lord's conduct in India were well-founded. But whatever might be the honourable gentleman's opinion of the noble lord's conduct, he had no right to presume that the House, or that His Majesty's Ministers would be influenced by that opinion. For his part, he believed there could scarcely be found another individual to deny that the Marquis Wellesley possessed all those great and splendid endowments which must enable any man to act a distin-

* Marquis Wellesley.

guished part on the political theatre; nor did he believe that there would be found in the empire another individual to assert that any thing had passed in that House by which the country ought to be induced to forego the advantage of Lord Wellesley's talents.

Mr. Whitbread then moved the Address, which was negatived without a division, and the Resolutions of the Committee agreed to.

EXPEDITION TO THE SCHELDT.

JANUARY 26th, 1810.

On the 26th of January, 1810, Lord Porchester moved, "That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the policy and conduct of the late Expedition to the Scheldt."

Mr. Canning,* in the course of a protracted discussion upon this motion said—That under the circumstances that had been stated, it would be better to postpone any direct motion for inquiry, until the House was in possession of the information which Government had promised. This was a deference which he conceived due to the Government. But whatever the contents of these papers might be, they would not supersede the necessity of an inquiry of some kind. Inquiry could not be avoided, it must take place sooner or later. And here he would take the opportunity of repelling an accusation made against him, that he had ever entertained

any wish or desire that all the facts connected with that most disgraceful and inglorious business, should not undergo the fullest investigation. No inquiry before that House, or any selection from it, he feared, would be competent to embrace the misconduct, supposing any imputable to them, of the commanders of the Expedition. The case was different, however, with regard to the share that Ministers had in the transaction. If blame was imputable to the plan or policy of the Expedition to Walcheren, he had nothing to say against the proposition of the noble lord, (Porchester) putting in, at the same time, his claim to a full share of the responsibility which the Government that set it forward might have incurred. He foresaw one inconvenience from the adoption of the motion, namely, that it would pledge Parliament to a particular mode of inquiry; a mode not the best calculated, in his opinion, to attain the ends which it proposed. Upon these grounds he thought it would be best to wait for the information that was promised. The practical delay would be but small. At the same time he thought that papers which were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, should have been sooner ready, and that not a moment should be lost in preparing the way for that public and impartial investigation, which no man in the House was more desirous than himself to see instituted. He would give his vote against the motion of the noble lord, but not in the hope of defeating inquiry, which could not, and must not be avoided. The country called for it; the country was entitled to it.

The House divided—

For Lord Porchester's motion . .	195
Against it	186
Majority	9

Lord Porchester, on Friday, the second of February, gave notice that on the Monday following he would move that certain papers relating to the late Expedition to the Scheldt be laid before the House.

Mr. Canning was anxious to give the inquiry the greatest possible effect. He had formerly suggested the propriety of referring the military evidence to other tribunals, and he gave it as his opinion that it would have been better so to have done. He would state, in a very few words, what he thought it would be most becoming the House to inquire into. There were three points to which he thought their attention should be directed. The first was the policy of the Expedition. This was the most extended question, since it comprehended the situation in which Great Britain was placed with the other Powers of Europe. For this he felt himself in the highest degree responsible. The military and naval proceedings, though he viewed them with the most favourable eye, he could not think himself responsible for. He did not consider himself at all answerable for the evacuation of Walcheren; at the same time, while saying this, he most distinctly desired to be understood as not giving an opinion either

the one way or the other. It might be that the House would be of opinion, that blame attached itself nowhere; but if it should appear that blame did attach somewhere, if he were too active in eliciting discoveries to the prejudice of others, it might appear that he wished to throw the blame off himself, by placing the misconduct of others in a most luminous point of view. He would therefore punctually give his attendance throughout the inquiry, and give every explanation of his own conduct; but it was his intention to avoid as much as possible taking an active part, where he was not personally concerned.

The House then, on the motion of Lord Porchester, resolved itself into the committee, to consider the policy and conduct of the Expedition to the Scheldt.

Mr. Yorke moved the standing order for the exclusion of strangers, which was of course enforced, and the gallery cleared. Minutes were taken of the evidence given before the committee, which contained the examination of witnesses from the 2d of February to the 10th of March.

Lord Porchester, on the 26th of March, moved the following Resolutions:—

"1.—That on the 28th of July last, and subsequent days, an armament, consisting of thirty thousand land forces, thirty-seven sail of the line, two ships of fifty, three of forty-four guns, twenty-four frigates, thirty-one sloops, five bomb vessels, and twenty-three gun brigs, sailed on the late Expedition to the Scheldt, having for its ob-

ject the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building at Antwerp or Flushing, or afloat on the Scheldt; the destruction of the arsenals and dock yards at Antwerp, Torneux, and Flushing; the reduction of the island of Walcheren, and the rendering, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war.

"2.—That Flushing surrendered on the 15th of August, whereby the reduction of the island of Walcheren was completed; and that on the 27th of August, all attempts on the fleet and arsenals of the enemy at Antwerp were, by the unanimous opinion of the lieutenant-generals, declared to be impracticable, and were abandoned.

"3.—That the destruction of the basin, dock-yard, arsenal, magazines, and naval store-houses of the town of Flushing, and of such part of the sea defences as it was found proper to destroy, having been effected on the 11th of December, the island of Walcheren was on the 23d of December evacuated by His Majesty's forces, and the Expedition ended.

"2.—That it does not appear to this House, that the failure of this Expedition is imputable to the conduct of the army or the navy in the execution of their instructions, relative to the military and naval operations in the Scheldt.

"5.—That on the 19th of August a malignant disorder shewed itself amongst His Majesty's troops; and that, on the 8th of September, the number of sick amounted to upwards of ten thousand nine hundred and forty-eight men.

"6.—That it appears by the report of the physician appointed to investigate the nature and causes of the malady to which His Majesty's troops were thus exposed, that the disease is one which prevails periodically in the islands of Zealand, and is of peculiar malignity there, and which constantly follows a law of season, appearing towards the end of summer, becoming more severe in the autumnal months, declining in October, and nearly ceasing in November. That perfect recoveries are rare, convalescence never secure; and that the recurrence of fever quickly lays the foundation of complaints which render a large proportion of the sufferers inefficient for future military purposes.

"7.—That of the army which embarked for service in the Scheldt, sixty officers and three thousand nine hundred men, exclusive of those killed by the enemy, had died before the 1st of February last, and on that day two hundred and seventeen officers, and eleven thousand two hundred and sixty-nine men were reported sick.

"8.—That the Expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken under circumstances which afforded no rational hope of adequate success, and at the precise season of the year when the malignant disease which has proved so fatal to His Majesty's brave troops was known to be most prevalent; and that the advisers of this ill-judged enterprize are, in the opinion of this House, deeply responsible for the heavy calamities with which its failure has been attended."

There was also a second set of resolutions, as follows, relating to the retention of the island of Walcheren:—

"1.—That Lieutenant-General Sir Eyre Coote having, on the 9th of September, been left in the command of Walcheren, with an army of about fifteen thousand men, did, on that day, make an official report on the state of the island, the extent of force required effectually to guard it, the nature and condition of its defences, and the number of men then sick and unfit for duty; representing that after such his exposition, His Majesty's Ministers would be the best judges of the propriety or possibility of keeping the island; and adding, that the advantages must be great indeed which could compensate the loss of lives and treasure which the retention must necessarily occasion.

"2.—That on the 23d of September, Sir Eyre Coote stated to His Majesty's Ministers, that the alarming progress of disease was such, that if it should continue in the same proportion for three weeks longer, (as he added there was every probability that it would), our possession of the island must become very precarious.

"3.—That on the 6th of October, Sir Eyre Coote, after stating that the number of sick was increasing, and that the effective force was thereby rendered so trivial, as to make the defence of the island if it should be attacked, extremely precarious, did express his anxiety to be informed of the intentions of His Majesty's Government as to the future state of Walcheren.

"4.—That notwithstanding these, and many other press-

ing representations, on the alarming condition of the troops, and the danger to which they were exposed, His Majesty's Ministers did neglect to come to any decision until the 4th of November, and that the final evacuation of Walcheren did not take place until the 23d of December.

"5.—That on the 10th of September, the number of sick in the island of Walcheren was, exclusive of officers, six thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight; and that the total number of sick embarked for England between the 15th of September and the 16th of November, was eleven thousand one hundred and ninety-nine, making in that period an increase of sick of four thousand two hundred and sixty-eight.

"6.—That although the great object of the Expedition had been abandoned as impracticable, a large proportion of the British army was (without any urgent or determined purpose in view, or any prospect of national advantage to justify such a hazard, or to compensate such a sacrifice) left by His Majesty's Ministers to the imminent danger of attack from the enemy, and exposed during a period of more than three months, and under circumstances of aggravated hardships, to the fatal ravages of a disease, which on the 31st of August had been officially announced to be daily increasing to a most alarming degree.

"7.—That such the conduct of His Majesty's advisers, calls for the severest censure of this House."

THURSDAY, MARCH 29th.

The House of Commons was engaged four nights in the discussion of the above Resolutions. In the course of the adjourned debate upon them, on the third night of the discussion, after Mr. Grattan had delivered a speech of great eloquence, in vehement condemnation of the Expedition,

Mr. Canning rose and said:—The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Grattan), who has just sat down, has concluded his speech with a declaration, that the calamities brought upon the country by the failure of the Expedition to the Scheldt, ought to be visited with exemplary severity upon the heads of those by whom that Expedition was planned and advised. Now, Sir, as one of the advisers of the Expedition, I rise, not only to speak in justification of it, but to contend, and I trust I shall be able to contend successfully, that in advising that measure His Majesty's Ministers were actuated by a just sense of their public duty; that they proceeded upon motives and principles, such as, if I were not myself a party concerned in the transaction, I should not scruple to assert entitled them to the approbation of their country; and such as they may confidently recommend to whoever may be hereafter their successors in office. They are principles, which, in whatever hands the administration may be placed, must

necessarily be adopted and acted upon, if the cause of the country is to be maintained.

For, Sir, in estimating the merits of the great public measure now under our consideration, we must not be contented to look upon it as a mere insulated question, we must regard it as a branch of that general system of policy and action which has been pursued throughout the whole course of the present war, and which has been invariably directed to the twofold object of preserving other nations from the domination of France, and insuring the integrity and independence of the British empire.

It cannot, I apprehend, require any aid of argument to prove to this House the deep and vital interest that we have in the latter object; neither do I think it difficult to shew, that in the former though our interest may be less direct and immediate, we have nevertheless an interest sufficiently strong to keep that object constantly in our view, and as strong an obligation to employ all the means in our power for its accomplishment. While Great Britain stands so pre-eminently high amongst the nations of Europe, she owes it as a duty to her own dignity and character to assist and protect weaker nations against oppression, not only so far as that can be done consistently with her own interests, but, I would rather say, so far as is not absolutely incompatible with her own security. True it undoubtedly is,

that of those nations, which, in different periods of the war, manifested a spirit of resistance against the encroachments or oppression of France, and to whose support this country has contributed generously and promptly every aid and effort in her power; true it undoubtedly is, and not more true than it is deeply to be lamented, that the course and consequences of the war have been such as to place many of those nations, in successive periods, at the mercy and under the controul of the enemy. We have been in the situation of fighting not against the power of France alone, but against those countries, to which we have heretofore furnished our assistance, but which, ranged by conquest on the side of France, have, whilst their hearts must be for us, been compelled by a dire necessity to raise their hands against us. It does not therefore follow that the principle of continental co-operation is unwise; or that our generosity has been detrimental to our interest. The destruction of the efforts of the enemy, the suspension of immediate danger to ourselves, and the chances afforded by the protraction of that period at the expiration of which we may probably have to contend for our own safety on our own soil—these are sufficient advantages to be derived from our efforts in behalf of other nations, even if we were to put out of account the higher considerations of national reputation and national faith. But considering at the same time that the period of this separate combat may arrive—that the

successive wars of the continent may probably enough, (if the power of France continues unbroken) be extinguished and swallowed up in one great war of the continent against this country—that this consummation (though it may be deferred, and though to defer it be worth every practicable exertion) yet cannot perhaps ultimately be avoided; I do admit that in all measures of co-operation with the powers of the continent we ought not to lose sight of our own separate security.

The prospective apprehension of these distant and contingent dangers to ourselves, ought not to induce us to withhold or to relax our efforts for others: their speedier downfall would but hasten the crisis to our struggle. It ought not to make us distrust the sincerity of their efforts in their own cause. They may be, it is true, hereafter (as many of them already have been) found to act against us; but their hostility to us must be preceded by their own ruin; and we may well believe it their desire to avoid an extremity which cannot be hurtful to us, till it has first been fatal to themselves. But we may naturally and justifiably endeavour, nay, we are bound on every principle of sound policy to endeavour, to combine in all our continental measures, with the consideration of what is immediately useful to others, that of what may be ultimately not prejudicial to ourselves. It is good to be generous to others. But to ourselves also we owe a duty of self-preservation; and that measure is the most prudent,

the most suitable, and the most advantageous, which, while it advances the common cause, in the first instance, does so in a manner consistent with our own permanent security, which gives strength to the combined efforts of our allies, and at the same time fortifies us for the separate contest which we may have to carry on hereafter, unaided and alone. Upon these grounds the King's Ministers acted in advising the late Expedition: and by these principles I desire that measure may be tried. The House then will see that I must disclaim altogether one mode of argument by which the Expedition has been condemned—that of estimating it solely by its utility as a diversion in favour of Austria. That it had that effect, that it was calculated to have that effect, and that that was of itself a most important object, is true. It is true, that when Austria had taken up arms against France, and was likely to furnish employment for the great mass of the French army, this country was bound to afford every possible assistance to that power, not only from the recollection of past alliance, but from a strong sense of common interest. But the question still remained, in what manner that assistance could be afforded most conveniently for us, as well as most advantageously for Austria; how the application of any British force might be rendered at once most beneficial to the cause of Austria, and conducive, or at least not detrimental, to the per-

manent security of this country. The Expedition to the Scheldt, therefore, as it is not to be considered on the one hand, as having been undertaken for an object purely selfish on our part, so is it not to be judged, in its result, by considerations exclusively connected with the cause and the interests of Austria. It must be viewed with reference to both these objects; and when so viewed, I am persuaded that it will appear to every reflecting mind, to have been not only wisely planned, but the very best measure that, all things considered, could at the time have been undertaken.

It appears by the papers upon the table, that the project of an Expedition to the Scheldt did not originate in the Austrian war. Undoubtedly it did not. An attack upon Walcheren was not a novel project with the Government of this country. It had been frequently, for many years past, in the contemplation of the British Cabinet. It neither grew out of the Austrian war, therefore, nor did it originate with the particular administration by which it was undertaken. The measure had been meditated and discussed by several successive administrations, when the temptations were much less, and the difficulties much greater than at the period now in question. The importance of the object had grown with the growing naval strength of the enemy in that quarter; and never had any occasion at once so favourable and

so urgent presented itself for such an enterprize, as that which occurred at the time when the late armament was fitted out. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than any intention to apply the circumstance, which I am now about to mention, in the way of recrimination against the honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House; but I am almost sure that it must be in their recollection as it is in mine, that the noble lord whom I had the honour to succeed in the office which I lately held in His Majesty's Government, and to whose talents and sagacity I am disposed to pay every imaginable respect, did, in a debate which took place very soon after the change of the Administration, of which he formed so distinguished a part (a debate which, from one of those circumstances that sometimes prevent our discussions from being known without our walls, was never made public), did strongly recommend to the Government then newly come into office, a vigilant attention to the growing naval means of the enemy in the Scheldt; that he described the accumulated facilities of annoyance afforded to Buonaparte by the possession of the mouths and the course of that river, and particularly pointed out the arsenal at Antwerp, as the most desirable and advantageous object of attack on any favourable occasion. In giving this advice, —in leaving this legacy,—in bequeathing this testamentary sanction for such an operation to his successors, that noble lord discharged a solemn

duty, and gave a proof of his patriotism as well as of his wisdom. Even in the then state of the enemy's naval resources in the Scheldt, he considered it as an object of wakeful and anxious jealousy and alarm to the Government of this country. I have, therefore, that noble lord's authority, I do not say for the precise detail and plan of this Expedition, but for the principle and object of it, for seizing the earliest opportunity to effect the destruction, if possible, of the enemy's naval force and arsenals in the Scheldt. I have the authority of that noble lord, who had successively filled the two departments of the state that best qualified him to judge of this question, the Admiralty, and the office in which I had the honour to succeed him—first, for the importance of the object, and, in the second place, for the practicability of the undertaking, or, at least, the justifiableness of the risk. And, if such were the noble lord's opinions at the period to which I refer, I will ask any honourable gentleman what was then the state of Antwerp; what was its real importance at the time when that noble lord bequeathed this warning to his successors, compared with its condition and importance at the period when the Expedition was actually undertaken? It must be quite unnecessary to recal to the recollection of the House the active and unceasing attention which Buonaparte had, during the whole of the intervening time, paid to his navy, and the boasts which he uniformly held out to Europe of his growing naval

power. To check the growth of that power was surely an object well worth every effort; and worth that which must attend every effort upon a large scale—the hazard of failure. It was an object, the success of which, if viewed in its effect upon the general scale of the war, would have been important in the highest degree, as lowering the pride and naval power of the enemy; viewed in its relation to the maritime war between this country and France, it was equally recommended by every consideration of national pride, of safety, and of economy. The destruction of the arsenals in the Scheldt might have spared us the necessity of a fleet in the Downs or of a fleet at Yarmouth, and either left that amount of naval force disposable for other services, or enabled us by such retrenchment the more effectually to aid our allies, or the better to support the burden of a protracted warfare. Independently, therefore, of any consideration of the Austrian war, an Expedition to the Scheldt was perhaps the effort best calculated to promote the essential interests of Great Britain.

I have thus briefly stated the general grounds upon which the Expedition was first resolved upon, and by which, of themselves, that resolution would, in my opinion, be altogether justified. Then came the Austrian war, and then came urgent applications from Austria for assistance—applications which, indeed, were scarcely neces-

sary, because we were called upon, by every principle of the most obvious policy, and every consideration of the strongest self-interest, to afford to her in her arduous and critical struggle all the succour and support in our power. With this disposition, the question which first arose was, how the assistance which we were both bound and willing to afford, could be rendered most effectual in support of the cause of Austria. And I can confidently aver, that if, in the state in which our determination then was, in respect to the Scheldt, any other destination could have been pointed out for an Expedition, more obviously serviceable to Austria, and affording an equal or a reasonable prospect of success, the superior interest which this country had in the success of an attack upon the Scheldt, would not alone have determined us against a change of destination. If other considerations were equally balanced, the obvious and essential interests of this country might fairly be allowed to turn the scale. But not only was there no other destination pointed out in which Austria might be more effectually aided, and which it was necessary to sacrifice to our preconceived partiality for the Scheldt; but I will venture to say, that after a full and fair consideration of every suggestion which was offered to us, there was no one point to which an Expedition could have gone, which, exclusively of the separate interests of this country,

could, from its general importance, policy, and practicability, be placed in competition with the capture or destruction of Antwerp. There are obviously two modes of aiding the efforts of an ally: the one to support him by direct co-operation with his armies in the field; the other, by a formidable diversion, to distract the attention of the enemy, and to relieve our ally from some part of the pressure of the vast military force concentrated against him. I should certainly not have thought it necessary to establish by argument the impracticability of a direct military co-operation with Austria in the situation to which the Continent was at that period reduced, if I had not heard some of the honourable gentlemen opposite contend that we should have sent our Expedition to the bottom of the Adriatic, to Trieste, in order to act in conjunction with the Austrians; I know not exactly where, but I suppose by penetrating through the Tyrol to Suabia: an idea so utterly extravagant and absurd, that the mention of it has filled me with amazement. Have the honourable gentlemen who expressed their approbation of such a plan, reflected upon the difficulties and dangers of sending a fleet of transports, crowded with troops, upon such a voyage, through the streights of Gibraltar, along the Mediterranean, and up the Adriatic, to a destination, at which it might arrive three or four months after it sailed, and two or three months after the junction for

which it was sent out was no longer either useful or attainable? Have they considered the enormous preparations, the immense tonnage, and the inordinate expenditure which it would have required to place an army in a situation to take the field after such a voyage, at such a distance, and in countries so little prepared to receive us? With respect to the other mode of direct co-operation—the landing with a British force in Lower Italy—it is only necessary to state, that that experiment was tried to a certain extent, and was only desisted from when it was incontestably found, that the further prosecution of it was useless, in consequence of the retreat of the Archduke John, with whose operations alone those of Sir John Stuart could have been combined. And how would this same retreat have operated upon the notable Expedition to Trieste, if unfortunately it had been adopted? Why, the consequence, it appears, would have been, that our armament on its arrival at Trieste, would have found the French in possession of that place, and no Austrian army or military force within three hundred miles of it. And then what mercy should we have found at the hands of our present accusers, if we had pleaded that, when the Expedition sailed, forsooth, we had every reason to think that it would be in time?

I must, however, beg leave in this place to state, in justice to the Austrian Government, that

the idea of requiring us to send out a British force to Trieste, never entered into their contemplation. Austria unquestionably did, as was naturally to be expected, point out several modes, by which the force of this country could be employed; but never hinted at, still less recommended, the impracticable scheme of an Expedition to Trieste.

The points, to which Austria did propose to the British Government to direct its attention, were distinctly and specifically these—1st, that an attempt should be made by a British force upon Italy; 2dly, that our operations in the Peninsula should be continued; and 3dly, that we should endeavour to operate a diversion in her favour, by landing an army in the north of Germany. These were the propositions actually made and strongly urged by the Austrian Government. With respect to the first, an attack on the side of Italy, I have already stated that such an attempt was made, and that it was only desisted from when a perseverance in it on our part, could no longer be productive of any benefit to the cause of Austria. As to the second proposition, the continuance of our efforts in the Peninsula, I need scarcely observe, that the British Government has fully complied with the desire of Austria in this respect, because every gentleman who hears me must be aware that our operations in the Peninsula, so far from having been slackened

or suspended, were pursued with unremitting earnestness and exertion.

It remains only to consider the third and last point, recommended by Austria for the employment of a British force, namely, the north of Germany. Gentlemen have dwelt with much emphasis upon the great advantages which would have been derived in aid of such an Expedition from the insurrections then known to exist in that quarter, and from the spirit of disaffection so prevalent throughout the whole of the population of Germany, which the first success of the British arms would have called forth into active and universal hostility against the common enemy. But I have always been of opinion, and have had occasion, more than once, to declare that opinion in this House, that to excite such insurrections, without having the means of affording effectual permanent protection to the insurgents, is an act of the greatest cruelty as well as impolicy.

Undoubtedly such insurrections, however temporary, might possibly have operated for the moment as a partial relief to Austria, by drawing off a portion of Buonaparte's troops, or detaining the reinforcements destined for his army on the Danube. But that advantage would also belong to the Expedition to the Scheldt. So therefore, the two rival destinations might be considered as equal. They were then to be compared as to their respective probabilities of success. Sup-

posing these probabilities equal also, then, and then only, would be to be considered the balance of advantage to this country in favour of the Scheldt. But supposing the failure in Germany the more likely, how would the evil of that failure be aggravated by the miseries which it would bring upon the unfortunate people who had been induced to join us! Gentlemen declaim against the Expedition to the Scheldt, merely because the objects of that Expedition, the capture of ships, and the destruction of naval arsenals, fix upon it the suspicion of a selfish motive. They appear to me to carry a principle, good in itself, much too far. Whenever any partial or temporary interest of our own clashes with a permanent and vital interest of an ally, our temporary interest ought certainly to give way; but to put our own interests of any description altogether out of view, merely for the purpose of avoiding a possible imputation of selfishness from a perverse construction of our motives, would be absurd and romantic in the extreme. At all events let those who feel such an extreme delicacy on this point consent to carry that delicacy a little further, and apply it where it is at least equally applicable, to the case of those districts of Germany, which the approach of a British army would have roused to insurrection, and which its retreat would leave to the vengeance of their oppressors; and let them consider whether a temporary success to our own

arms, or a partial relief to Austria, would have been legitimately purchased by such a sacrifice of those whom we pretended to deliver, but should, in truth, by such a course betray.

If indeed we could have hoped to effect their permanent deliverance, the case would have been widely different. In that case the north of Germany would unquestionably have been the chosen scene of our exertions. But what was the chance of such success?

No long period has elapsed since a British army was actually sent to the north of Germany to co-operate against France, and it has been attempted to be argued, that those who were parties to, or who approved the sending out that former Expedition (which arrived in Germany just in time to learn the issue of the fatal battle of Austerlitz), could have no possible justification, for not having sent the late Expedition to the same destination. But here I must beg of gentlemen to consider the difference in the situation of affairs at these different periods; and to compare the state of Europe at the time when the former armament was sent to the north of Germany, with the situation to which it had been reduced at the period when the Expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken. On the former occasion a formidable Russian army was combatting, in support of the Austrian monarchy; and, with the Emperor at its head, was already participating in the

main operations of the campaign : another Russian force of fifteen thousand men was advancing in the north ; and with a corps of fifteen thousand Swedes was ready to take the field in conjunction with our Expedition. Denmark was neutral; the power of Prussia was whole and unbroken ; and though her neutrality was cold, perhaps it was not a mere profession; the strength and character of her armies made her policy respected, and preserved her territory from French violation. Compare with this description, which every honourable member must admit to be just, the situation of the north of Germany last year, when we were invited by the Austrian Government to make a diversion there in its favour. Russia, instead of being leagued against France, was now her most obsequious and devoted ally ; Denmark our enemy ; the military power of Prussia no longer formidable even by reputation, but broken down in one disastrous battle, the sequel of a disastrous policy; and the whole face of Germany, once covered with independent and respectable states, now strewed with the fragments of her ancient institutions, and presenting nothing in their room but enfeebled or usurped governments, all leagued with, or subservient to France. Such was the state of things, in which we were invited to send an army to the north of Germany. Let us consider a little the detail of such an operation. Could we have sent our army

upon any other condition, or with any other view than that it should return to England in the winter? No one of those who have most strenuously contended for the policy of a diversion in the north of Germany, has ventured to go the length of stating that it would have been politic to risk the fate of a British army during the winter in that part of the continent. The times are indeed long past, when foreign armies, moving in great masses, could maintain themselves like a separate state, a nation among nations, in the heart of Germany, for many successive seasons: the circumstances of Europe are completely changed since any such comprehensive plan of continuous operations could have been practicable; and, at all events, the force we could spare for such an undertaking must have been so small as to be wholly inadequate to the accomplishment of it. With whatever good fortune, therefore, it might have commenced its career, it must have been finally withdrawn before the winter. And I shudder at the calamities, that would have been brought upon the unfortunate inhabitants, who, having been induced to take up arms upon the faith of British protection, must have been left exposed to all the vindictive outrages of exasperated tyranny, whenever the progress of the seasons, independent of military disasters, should render it indispensable for the British army to retire.

But this is not all. It is not alone a humane consideration for the sufferings that might have been entailed upon the wretched inhabitants, nor even a regard for the ultimate security of the British army, that rendered an expedition to the north of Germany, in my opinion, inexpedient and impolitic. There were other considerations, which could not be safely overlooked at a time when such an Expedition was in agitation. Broken down and humbled as Prussia was, she still had an army, which, though unable to make head against France, might yet have been very formidable against the limited force which we could have sent out to Germany. With that army the British army, in the course of its operations, must have come in contact; and, if that were likely (nay, rather, if it was impossible to avoid it), I will ask whether, under all the circumstances of Europe, it would have been prudent in us to have involved ourselves in active hostilities with Prussia; or, on the other hand, if any thing like an understanding should appear to have existed between Prussia and us, would it not have furnished Buonaparte with a plausible pretext for wresting from the monarch of that country the bauble of a sceptre, and tearing from his head the mockery of a crown which he is still allowed to wear? If, then, these would have been the consequences that would have resulted from an Expedition to the north of Germany, need more

be said to shew, that it was the bounden duty of His Majesty's Government to pause before they should undertake it; nay, that they are fully justified in having declined the undertaking after the most grave and mature deliberation?

All this would be true, even on the supposition that the insurrections in Germany had risen to such a height, without our interference, as to hold out some temptation to an enterprize of this kind. Without such a temptation, to be sure, the hostile invasion of Germany would have been madness. But after all, what was actually at the time the state of these insurrections? What progress had they made, or what assistance were they likely to afford to our efforts, if an expedition from Great Britain had been sent thither? A bold and adventurous soldier (Schill), impelled by loyalty and national zeal, though unauthorized by his sovereign, took up arms against the common enemy, and having assembled a few followers, commenced an intrepid but short-lived career of active hostility and daring enterprize; the Prince of Hesse, seeking the recovery of the dominions of which he had been tyrannically deprived by Buonaparte, was employed in raising a corps of partisans; and the gallant Duke of Brunswick, anxious to revenge the wrongs sustained by his illustrious house, had placed himself at the head of a small but chosen body of troops, and was enabled, partly by the bravery

of his followers, and partly by the good will of the people, to traverse the whole of the north of Germany unmolested, defeating several corps of the enemy, his superiors in number, on the way. This was the sum of the insurrections in the north of Germany. The little obstruction given to the different bodies of troops in arms was undoubtedly a proof of the disposition of the mass of the inhabitants; but that disposition, though friendly, was inactive and quiescent. Splendid as they were as instances of individual heroism, these partial and detached exertions surely did not amount to such an expression of national will, nor hold out such assurance of general concert, as would alone have justified a landing in the north of Germany, in reliance upon the co-operation of the people. It was surely incumbent upon us, before we embarked in such a momentous enterprize, to compare our means with the end; to weigh against the possible advantage the certain sacrifice; and to keep ever uppermost in our contemplation the dreadful sufferings that its failure or even its partial success, would draw down upon the population of Germany. The feelings of humanity no less than considerations of prudence, were against the measure, nor could Austria justly expect, nor could we consistently afford her, that temporary relief which, it is admitted, she might have gained, at the expence

of so much certain and permanent injury to others.

The course which His Majesty's Government, on the contrary, did actually take, was calculated to promote alike the interests of our ally and our own, to a degree in all probability much greater, and in a manner free from the objection of injustice.

Sir, I understand that in a French newspaper, published immediately under the eye of the Government at Paris, in an account of some former debate in this House, expressions have been imputed to me, importing that, when the Expedition sailed for the Scheldt, I looked for and expected an active co-operation from the people of Flanders and Holland. The words of so insignificant an individual as myself could hardly be worth the trouble of misrepresentation—nor should I think myself warranted to take up the time of the House in setting such misrepresentation right—were it not that, from the official situation which I had the honour to fill when this enterprize was undertaken, I might be supposed to speak from some ascertained knowledge of the dispositions of the inhabitants of the countries in question; and a declaration, taken to be official, might be used to their wrong. I think it right, therefore, to avail myself of this opportunity to deny that I ever uttered such an expression; I

will go farther, and fairly and truly state, that no expectation of the kind was entertained; and that one consideration which mainly recommended the Expedition to the Scheldt to my mind, was the absence of any such view or expectation. I knew we had not a force, and I did not think it was our policy to engage in a system of continental operations. The same objections which I felt to the north of Germany would have weighed with me against Antwerp, if it had been proposed to me to go in search of insurrections. I agreed to the Expedition to the Scheldt as a military, not a political enterprize; as an enterprize of destructive hostility, not of conciliatory co-operation. I had no hope of conquering through Flanders; or of keeping Flanders against France; or of liberating Holland by penetrating its frontier from the Scheldt. But I did think and do think still, that a great blow was to be struck against the pride and power of Buonaparte, by the destruction of his fleet and arsenals. I wished for no longer occupation than might be sufficient for this purpose, and this I expected to gain, not by the connivance of the inhabitants, but by force, and by taking them unprepared. Indeed if I were to lay my finger upon that spot of subjugated Europe, which has suffered the least from French tyranny and oppression, and where, therefore, co-operation was least to be expected, I should point out Antwerp. Before the French Revolu-

tion, Antwerp was in a state of comparative desolation; her former greatness had vanished; her prosperity was extinguished; her trade annihilated; her population was dwindled, and the grass growing in her streets, formerly the crowded haunts of industry and commerce. To this wretched state had Antwerp been reduced, not by nature, but by treaty; not by any moral or physical defect, but by the arts of the diplomatist and the dash of a pen; and from the destructive effects of a restriction so imposed, was she liberated in consequence of her annexation to France. Neither was there any thing of attachment to her former government to counteract the natural influence of her present prosperity; and it was against the sources of that prosperity, her growing maritime greatness, that this blow was aimed. From the population of Antwerp, therefore, no aid or co-operation was to be expected. They alone, perhaps, of all the inhabitants of the continent would suffer by being replaced in the situation in which they had been previous to the French Revolution. On what, then, did we ground our hopes of success? I have stated on our own means, and their want of preparation. Undoubtedly we had expected to be able to take Antwerp by surprise; and we had every reason to suppose it would be found in such a state from all the information which had been previously collected upon the subject. That the information

upon which that expectation was founded, was correct, has since been unequivocally proved. I refer, as the most satisfactory proof on this point, to certain articles which were published in the Moniteur, at the time when the destination of the Expedition was first publicly known at Paris, purporting to be the official correspondence between Buonaparte and his minister of war; and manifestly published with a view to make the people of France believe that Antwerp had not been incautiously neglected. This correspondence set forth that our Expedition had been originally intended for Spain, but that in consequence of the conclusion of the armistice between France and Austria, its destination was subsequently changed. An assertion which we know to be false, and which could have no object but to excuse the not having made timely preparations at Antwerp. This is a construction of itself sufficiently evident, but is made still more so by the order with which this correspondence was followed—an order, commanding the *gens d'armes* and the *garde nationale* to march to Antwerp immediately, and to put that city in a perfect state of defence. Most unquestionably if that city had been previously secure against attack, it would not have been necessary to issue an order calling for the services of comparatively irregular troops, for the purpose of putting it into a proper state for defence. Such a measure is a virtual

admission that Antwerp was in an unprepared state, that the enemy was taken by surprise. It is an evidence derived from the enemy himself, of the wisdom of the original plan of the Expedition—and of the original probability of its success.

But it has been urged with a great apparent triumph against His Majesty's Ministers, either that they had not foreseen the difficulties encountered in the progress of the Expedition, or that having been aware of those difficulties and dangers, and having yet sent out the armament under all these discouragements, they are more deeply responsible for all the consequences of it. Undoubtedly His Majesty's Ministers did foresee difficulties in the course which they were pursuing (and what great military measure can be expected to be wholly free from them), but the difficulties which they foresaw were not of a nature to preclude a rational prospect of success. If I am to judge by what I have heard in the course of this discussion, gentlemen think that before any expedition should ever sail from our shores, His Majesty's Ministers should not only have an absolute certainty of ultimate success, but should also trace out to the respective commanders every step by which they are to proceed in the execution of the service intrusted to them. In that case no expedition would ever be undertaken; for what mortal foresight can take in all the

possible casualties that may occur to defeat the object? Or who would undertake to furnish a general with a detailed plan of all the operations which he may have to execute, without leaving him any discretion to depart under any circumstances, from the strict line of his instructions; considering how much must always depend upon contingencies which cannot be foreseen, as well as upon observations made, and information collected, upon the spot. A man engaged in a game of chess, may, without any question, by taking certain moves on the part of his adversary for granted, insure his own success. But then if his adversary should vary from the course which he assumes for him, all his hopes would be frustrated, and all his plans would fall to the ground. All that can, upon this point, be required of a government, is, that they should in the first place select a proper object to justify the attempt by its importance, and where there may be a probable prospect of success; that their views, respecting such object should be communicated without reserve to the generals commanding, to whom at the same time should be left a certain degree of discretion as to the means of executing the service; and that they should provide adequate means for carrying any plan that may be determined upon into execution. Much has been said as to the insufficiency of the means provided for the regular siege of Antwerp; but in this objection it is assumed

that a regular siege was necessary for its reduction. The expectation of the Government certainly was, that it would be taken by surprise, and carried by bombardment or by an assault. Much censure has also been bestowed upon His Majesty's Ministers for having undertaken the Expedition at all in opposition to the declared opinions of the Commander-in-Chief and of Colonel Gordon; and much stress is laid upon a particular expression of the latter officer, viz. "that it was a desperate enterprise." It appears to me that this expression does not bear out the interpretation which has been given to it. It is clearly used by Colonel Gordon in a colloquial sense, but honourable gentlemen extract from it more than its strict etymological meaning; and insist, that according to Colonel Gordon, the enterprise was so difficult and hazardous, as, if undertaken, to preclude all hope of success, and to include every ground of failure.

Great efforts, I observe, have on the other hand been made to disparage the opinions of General Brownrigg, and with this view particularly it has been urged against him that he had not stated the authorities upon which those opinions were founded. I observe, indeed, that those gentlemen who seem to set so high a value on authorities, never once thought of calling for the authorities upon which the opinions of those officers were founded whose testimony appeared in any degree

to bear against the Government. But so minute, so anxious are they in scrutinizing and sifting every thing that favours His Majesty's Ministers, that if General Brownrigg had quoted authorities for his opinion, I am convinced they would have called for the authorities of these authorities, and so on, until at length they should arrive at some point where they could make a stand and withhold belief. An old Indian mythology affirms that this globe is supported by an elephant: a question arises, what supports the elephant? the answer is "a tortoise;" well, and upon what does the tortoise rest? to that question the mythologist affords no answer. And in like manner, General Brownrigg's authorities must have had some end, and so the honourable gentlemen would find at last some ground of doubt, and some excuse for incredulity.

It has been much insisted upon as a ground of charge against the Government, that the opinion of Lord Chatham had not been taken upon the policy and practicability of the Expedition; but upon what ground does such a charge rest? As a Cabinet Minister, Lord Chatham was a party to the principle, and by having accepted the command in chief he rendered himself more particularly responsible for its execution. There is a story which I remember to have heard more than once from an honourable member of this House, now no more (Mr. Fox), of two generals in the

French service, one of whom, addressing his troops at the commencement of a battle or an assault, used to say, "*Allez, mes enfans;*" the other "*Allons, mes enfans.*" The latter was the more popular commander, as he shewed his confidence in the enterprise and his expectation of success, by his willingness to share in the perils and the glory of the attempt. Upon the same principle the honourable gentlemen may infer Lord Chatham's approbation of the Expedition, from his consenting, by the acceptance of the command, to associate himself with its operations and its success.

In reply to all that has been said, as to the impracticability of taking Antwerp by surprise, the noble lord on the bench behind me (Lord Castlereagh) has very appositely quoted the case of Copenhagen: that case unfortunately, however, "was not to the taste of the honourable gentlemen opposite:" for, say they, "Copenhagen was taken too much by surprise. And besides, the inhabitants of Copenhagen were filled with such indignation against us for the unprovoked attack;" that—what? Why "that they surrendered the city, without making all the resistance which the state of its defences would have allowed." This was, certainly, the oddest effect of indignation that I have ever heard of; that it should diminish energy, and facilitate surrender; instead of animating and exasperating hostility,

and determining men to defend themselves to the last extremity!

But, if instances are necessary to prove the practicability of carrying such a place as Antwerp by a *coup-de-main*, they present themselves to recollection in abundance. We cannot forget how the strong fortresses of Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and the other fortified places in Dutch Flanders, and Brabant, fell without a struggle before Dumourier in the infancy of the French Revolution. These instances, however, will perhaps be set aside by the honourable gentlemen as easily, and certainly with more plausibility than Copenhagen. Their fall was the effect of revolutionary principles, it will be said. They were half conquered before the enemy appeared under their walls. Let us go back then to former wars, when no such extraneous principles operated upon the fate of fortified towns, and we shall find a regular fortification, Prague, surrendering upon a bombardment of seven days. We shall find Schweidnitz, in Silesia, a fortress deemed impregnable, yet taken and retaken by surprise, I think three several times, betwen the years 1747 and 1761, and a fourth time, I believe, in 1762, but then to be sure by a regular siege. The three former captures were by *coup-de-main*. If I were to go farther back still, I might refer to the case of Lerida in Catalonia, before which the great Condè failed in a regular siege, and yet, when

afterwards invested by the Duke of Orleans, the place was carried by assault in a fortnight.

It is not my object to prove by these instances, out of the numberless cases of a similar description that could be quoted, that, because places deemed secure against such a mode of attack have sometimes been reduced by a *coup-de-main*, therefore every impracticable attempt upon a strong fortress, may prudently be hazarded! No such thing. The inference that I draw from the cases alluded to, is simply this, that as in the progress of wars, fortresses of the highest military description, fortresses generally deemed impregnable, have been reduced by summary means, it does not necessarily follow, that an expedition fitted out under peculiarly favourable circumstances, for the attainment of such an object, should be justly condemned as rash and absurd, because the place against which it is directed may have been, in other times, considered as not liable to be taken without regular approaches. I do not mean to say, that a positive dependence ought by preference to be placed on improbable contingencies, but that war never has been nor ever can be carried on, without incurring some danger, and leaving something to hazard? Undoubtedly means should be diligently proportioned to ends, every practicable foresight should be exercised, every attainable security taken, and as little left to chance as may be. But when, after all that human wisdom

can do, to chance something must still be left; when, after all physical and material means are provided, spirit and enterprize must after all turn the scale: I am not prepared to condemn an expedition because I cannot beforehand demonstrate that it will succeed. The general who surrendered without a blow, because the enemy outnumbered him, in a certain given proportion, may have acted according to all the rules of war. When Lord Peterborough took Montjuich, he sinned against all the principles of military calculation. But I read with more delight of Lord Peterborough's romantic achievements, than I do of the sober and regular movements of his successor, who proceeded with the most scrupulous regularity, to lose back all that his predecessor had so irregularly won. A book came out, some years ago, in France, on the subject of a carriage, or some such vehicle, which had been contrived in this country, I believe, for a wager at Newmarket, to go a certain distance in a given time. The author of the book undertook to prove, very learnedly, that the project could not possibly succeed. He formed a most elaborate calculation, according to the most precise rules, which gave the greatest satisfaction to all the scientific of Paris. A was to represent the carriage; B the horses; C the driver; D the resistance of the air; E the friction of the earth; and F the utter impossibility of success. And A plus, B plus,

C plus, D plus, E was equal to F, and therefore the project must fail. While the book was publishing, however, the wager was won; but the lovers of science contented themselves with affirming that, though the project did succeed, it ought not to have succeeded. Now, Sir, I am ready to admit that honourable gentlemen came forward with their mathematical reasoning under very great advantages; the Expedition, upon whatever grounds undertaken, has failed. But, whatever may be the reasoning on their part, I must ever contend that this failure has risen from causes which it was utterly impossible for human wisdom or power to controul. It was chiefly to that state of the winds by which the Expedition was compelled to go into the Room-pot, and to the consequent impossibility of capturing Cadsand, that this failure is to be attributed. I will ask any honourable gentleman, whether, if Cadsand had been reduced in the first instance, and the passage up the Scheldt at once opened and free, there would not have been good reason to expect complete ultimate success?

From the countenances of some of the honourable gentlemen opposite, I collect that there are judges in this House before whom the accused appear under great disadvantage. I feel sensibly, that I labour under considerable difficulty in arguing this case before those gentlemen by whom His Majesty's Ministers have heretofore

been called on, not only to defend themselves for failures, but to exculpate themselves for victories, and to make atonement for success. From those gentlemen undoubtedly I am not sanguine enough to look for any very favourable decision. Such, I trust, however, is not the disposition of the whole House. The House will not make His Majesty's Ministers responsible for disasters which they could not prevent; nor censure them because the weather proved unfavourable; it will not, I am persuaded, regard with a prejudicial harshness and severity the conduct of men, to whom the utmost stretch of human malice could impute no motive but that of having desired, at great risk to their own situations, to render a great service to the country. They had but to be still to be safe: but it never did and never could escape them, that, in an undertaking of such magnitude and hazard, the discredit and unpopularity to be incurred by failure, infinitely counterbalanced any credit that would be given to them by their opponents for success.

For, Sir, in all discussions upon the events of the war, I observe that some gentlemen mete out a very different measure of judgment to the actions and undertakings of their own Government, and those of the enemy. They uniformly find room for panegyric in the successes of the French Ruler; nor do I recollect to have ever heard one of them censure the conduct of Buonaparte for

his oversights or his failures. The injudicious and unsuccessful attack upon Acre, the defeat at Aspern, and the shutting himself up after that defeat in the island of Inder-lobau—a measure universally condemned by military men as an egregious error, and one which afforded to Austria an opportunity of decisive and destructive success, if, happily, advantage had been taken of it —these acts of rashness and misconduct have passed, so far as I have observed, without animadversion. But while they overlook the blunders of the enemy, and give him the fullest credit for his successes, they disparage every advantage, and exaggerate every misfortune of this country. According to their just standard, any success on the part of the British Government is invariably the result of accident, but failure is evidence of ignorance and incapacity. But let us suppose the course of the campaign which we are now discussing to have been inverted; suppose the enemy to have been the assailant; suppose that instead of having to justify themselves for having captured Walcheren, His Majesty's Ministers had now to defend themselves for having suffered the Isle of Wight to be occupied by the enemy; for having allowed a French army to remain for three whole months in possession of a station menacing and overawing our principal naval arsenal at Portsmouth? What would be the severity of the charges which their accusers would then have

brought against them; what admiration would have been expressed of the enterprise of the enemy, and what epithet of disgrace left unapplied to the Ministers who had thus been taken by surprise? And yet, extravagant as this supposition may sound, the continued occupation of Walcheren by a British army during so many months, had precisely the same effect with respect to France, to which the Scheldt is not less important, as a naval port and arsenal, than Portsmouth to this country.

The continued occupation of Walcheren would have been not less a blow to the maritime power, and to the pride of Buonaparte, than that of the Isle of Wight by France, to the power and pride of Great Britain. In that view—in contemplation of its moral effect upon the minds of the people of France, as much as in respect to its solid advantages—I concurred in the destination of the Expedition to the Scheldt. I think it would have been of incalculable benefit that the Ruler of France should see that he could not strip his coasts and country of troops, and draw the whole strength of his army into the heart of distant kingdoms, without subjecting to insult and invasion his own immediate territories, and the dearest interests of his empire.

That these and other objects have been blasted by the ultimate failure of the Expedition, I do not attempt to deny. But while the magnitude

of these objects aggravates the regret which its failure naturally occasions, it offers to the discriminating justice of the House what will be deemed, I trust, a sufficient justification of the undertaking.

Having said thus much upon the general question of the policy of the Expedition, in which I feel myself involved in a common responsibility with all those who were at the time of its being undertaken members of His Majesty's Government, I come now to that part of the question in which I am no otherwise concerned, than that, as having concurred in advising the Expedition, I may be, to a certain degree, responsible for all its consequences; but in which I had no personal share—I mean the period of the evacuation of Walcheren. Upon this subject the resolution of censure proposed by the noble lord, appears to me immeasurably severe. No man can, in my opinion, think conscientiously that His Majesty's Ministers, with the island of Walcheren in their hands, with so many strong reasons for retaining it, if the retention were possible, could reasonably be expected to come to an immediate decision upon a point involving so many considerations of infinite importance and embarrassment.

I have already stated, among the grounds for attempting the Expedition, the commanding position of Walcheren; the curb which it put upon the maritime strength, and, I might add, upon the

commercial greatness of the French empire. The customs of Antwerp are at least one third of the whole custom revenue of Buonaparte. Add to this considerations of economy: if (as was at least the opinion of some of the most competent judges) the possession of Flushing would have enabled us to diminish the amount of the fleet destined to watch the Scheldt: add, too, the military triumph of wresting and retaining from the enemy the key of this naval arsenal, upon the creation of which he had rested so much too of his glory. Against this was to be put the afflicting sickness and mortality which prevailed among our troops; a calamity of which it is as absurd as unjust to pretend that the Ministers did not feel all the weight and poignancy as much as those who affect to be the loudest in deploring it. But neither the original plan of the Expedition, nor the prolongation of the stay of the army in Walcheren, are fairly censurable on this account, in the manner and to the degree to which the noble lord proposes to inflict his censure.

If an expedition is never to be sent to a climate less healthy than that in which we have the happiness to live, the circle of warfare will undoubtedly be much contracted. If the authority of the very eminent physician (Sir John Pringle), which has been quoted with so much confidence, is to be conclusive upon this question, that same authority proves a great deal too much; for, if

taken in its full extent, it would follow that no expedition ought ever to be sent to any part of Dutch Flanders. It would condemn retrospectively most of our former expeditions to the continent, and specifically all those campaigns of which Sir John Pringle himself has written the history.

Every man who has read the papers on the table must feel, and deeply feel, for the miseries unavoidably incident to war; but though these miseries have been brought nearer to our view than in former instances, and though it may possibly suit the particular purposes of some gentlemen to dwell upon them, yet I must beg of the House not to suffer themselves to be so far biassed in their judgment by the impulse of a very honourable feeling, as to imagine that the instance of this Expedition, however striking, is singular in the history of the wars of this country: I beg them not to imagine that they are at liberty to exhaust the whole of their compassion on Walcheren alone; nor to deceive themselves as to the tenure by which our West India islands are held. No man can deplore more than I do the waste of life that results from the acquisition and retention of such possessions; but it must be considered at the same time that no important national advantage is to be gained without some kind of sacrifice; and however we may lament the price at which it is purchased, a government

would betray its trust, which should precipitately abandon a great and essential object of national acquisition, or national glory, even from such a laudable impulse. Happy, indeed, would it be for mankind, if the slaughter of the battle was the only evil of war. But there are, it is too true, various other sufferings consequent upon a state of war, besides those that are produced by engagements in the field; sufferings which have not the animation of effort, or the consolation of glory: but let it not be supposed that they were incurred in so much greater proportion for Walcheren as to require the exaction of a vindictive retribution from Ministers in this case more than in any other. Walcheren had often been an object of British desire, aye, and of British possession too. We have won it—we have held it in former times. Its importance to this country is now increased ten-fold; surely its climate is not in the same proportion become more pestilential. It has been confidently asserted in this debate, that a clause existed in the capitulation of the regiment of Berne, when in the service of the Dutch Government, stipulating that these troops should not be employed in Walcheren. This assertion I cannot take upon myself positively to contradict; but I can affirm, from very good authority, that this very regiment of Berne has, in point of fact, more than once, within the last twenty years, made a part of the garrison of

Walcheren. And I have further been assured, too, that after the most diligent search no such clause is to be found in any published treaty or capitulation of the Cantons; though there is, in some of the capitulations published in Dumont's collection, an article providing that the Swiss auxiliaries shall not serve in Batavia or the other Dutch colonies. This stipulation is, as we know, not unusual; the foreign troops in our own service are not bound to serve in the British colonies.

Still, however, the whole point thus at issue is merely a question of degree. I admit, without hesitation, that the miseries incident to an unhealthy situation may overbalance many and considerable political advantages. But the question to be considered is, what were the nature and extent of the advantages to be derived from the possession of Walcheren, and were these advantages such as to justify the retaining it, could it have been retained, at any moderate sacrifice? This is the calculation into which gentlemen should enter, before they make up their minds to pass censure upon His Majesty's Ministers for having kept the island so long. The result of such a calculation, I firmly and conscientiously believe, will be, that such was the importance of Walcheren to this country, that very great efforts ought to have been made to retain it; and that His Majesty's Ministers were perfectly justified in having hesitated as long as they did, before they

finally determined to abandon so very valuable a possession: my doubt, I confess, is, whether, they ought to have abandoned it at all.

If, indeed, His Majesty's Ministers had previously resolved to evacuate the island, I am not ready to affirm, or even to admit, that they were in that case justifiable in retaining it so long merely with a view to the destruction of the works at Flushing, or in compliance with the wishes of Austria. The destruction of the basin at Flushing, a mere temporary mischief to the enemy, to be repaired by money, ought not, in my opinion, to have been purchased by any avoidable expence of British life. It was not an advantage worth such a price; and as to Austria, though I would do much, and sacrifice much for an ally in the war, yet in the actual situation of her affairs at that period, so long after the armistice, with so very little reasonable probability of the renewal of hostilities, if our army was exposed to ten days unnecessary sickness upon the supposition of affording any effectual aid to Austria, then I must say, that there does not appear to me to have been any just proportion between the advantage expected and the sacrifice actually made.

Such, however, do not appear to have been the motives of the delay. It appears that His Majesty's Ministers received successive reports, which went so far to encourage the hope of

being enabled to retain Walcheren, that I must take it for granted they were induced really to look to that object, that they did not unnecessarily expose the army to the influence of disease for a day after they had finally resolved on abandoning the island; and under this impression I shall certainly vote against the second resolution of the noble lord, though I shall at the same time feel it necessary to move or to suggest an amendment to the counter resolutions of the honourable and gallant general (General Crawford). The object of my amendment will be to omit the specific grounds of justification arising from the circumstances of Austria, and from the destruction of the basin at Flushing; and to leave that justification on the plain and obvious ground of the necessity of collecting the materials for an opinion, and the danger of deciding precipitately on so great and important a question. I am perfectly ready to concur in the conclusion that no blame attaches to the Government: but I cannot concur in the honourable general's statement of the premises from which that conclusion is to be drawn. These, Sir, are the grounds upon which I as cordially join in acquitting the Ministers upon the second of the noble lord's propositions, in which I am not myself personally implicated, as I confidently expect, from the reflecting justice and temper of the House, an acquittal for myself in common with my former

colleagues, upon the charge contained in the noble lord's first Resolution.

Something yet remains to be said upon one topic on which much stress has been laid by our accusers—the policy of marking with extraordinary severity a failure so disastrous as this is represented to have been, of an enterprise (as it is averred), so rashly undertaken.

Sir, of this policy, as a matter distinct from justice, I take the liberty to entertain great doubts. I doubt whether the vice of the British Constitution and Government be a too great proneness to undertake splendid and daring enterprises, or its main perfection an uncommon facility for conducting the operations of war. There is enough already, as it appears to me, both of difficulty to impede and of responsibility to daunt any administration in this country, to whom the conduct of a war is entrusted: and when that war is to be carried on against such an enemy as him with whom we have to contend at present, it is not, in my humble opinion, politic to go one step beyond what justice may prescribe to enhance that difficulty, and press the weight of that responsibility upon the Government. Possibly I might think that even to stop something short of an extreme and rigorous account, might be the more politic alternative of the two. We have to contend against an enemy who, with whatever qualifications he may be endowed by nature, has

full scope and play given to all his faculties and views, by the unlimited power, the irresponsible freedom with which he acts. He asks no consent, he renders no account, he wields at will the population and resources of a mighty empire, and its dependent states. His successes are magnified with enthusiasm, his failures silently passed over. And against this unity of counsel and this liberty of action we have to contend, under the disadvantages of a mixed and complicated government. Disadvantages in this respect they are, though happily and gloriously redeemed and compensated by the great and manifold blessings of a constitution unequalled by any other system of human policy in the history of the world! Secrecy of design, celerity of execution, a boldness of adventure arising from fearlessness of responsibility for ill success, are the qualities the most useful for the vigorous prosecution of military operations. They are advantages which our despotic adversary enjoys in the most eminent degree. They are those which a free government necessarily wants. I doubt whether it be politic to aggravate the inequality of such a contest, by a severity of scrutiny, and a hardness of animadversion upon failure, which, by making responsibility too heavy to be borne, has a tendency to make all enterprise too hazardous to be attempted. Neither again, while I admit and lament the failure of this Expedition, can I agree with those

who consider the disappointment of a great object of national policy as synonimous with national disgrace, and as pregnant with national ruin.

Disgrace happily there has been none. Our arms are not only untarnished in this enterprise, but have been crowned with signal success. It is not by military defeat that we have incurred political disappointment.

And as to national ruin, or any real danger, external or internal, to the state, from the failure of this undertaking, and from the judgment of acquittal which it is anticipated the House may pronounce upon the authors of it, I confess they appear to me to be visionary apprehensions.

That the inquiry which has taken place into this subject was proper and necessary, that it was due to the magnitude of the case and to the feelings of the country, I admit, as willingly as any man—I think it will be generally agreed that the inquiry so instituted has been conducted throughout with as much industry and impartiality as temper and moderation.

I hope it will be felt that those who were implicated in it have not shrunk from the investigation, but have courted it with all becoming deference, and now await the result with all humility, but with all confidence in its justice.

When that result shall be pronounced, I trust that it will meet the dispassionate acquiescence and approbation of the country. Nor do I fear

any shock from the failure of the Expedition to the Scheldt (disastrous and afflicting as it has been), or from the conduct of this House upon it, either to the substantial and magnificent fabric of the British Constitution, or to the sound and solid foundation of British greatness and prosperity. And so, Sir, upon every ground of feeling, reason, and principle, I expect, from the justice of the House, a vote in opposition to the resolutions of the noble lord.

The debate was again adjourned to the following day (Friday), and after a protracted discussion, the House divided at *seven* o'clock on the morning of Saturday:—

For Lord Porchester's Resolutions . .	227
Against them	275
Majority for Ministers	48

Mr. Canning's amendment was carried by a majority of 51, and a resolution (proposed by General Crawford), was also carried by a majority of 23, declaratory of the approbation of the House in the retention of Walcheren, and consequently approving the conduct of Ministers.

END OF VOL. II.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT